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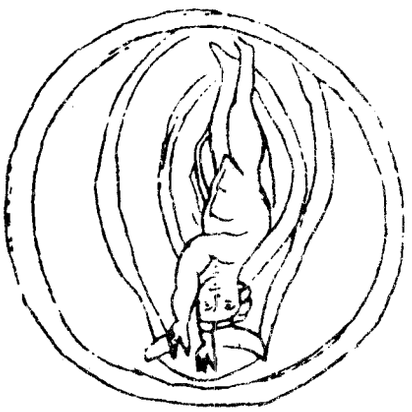
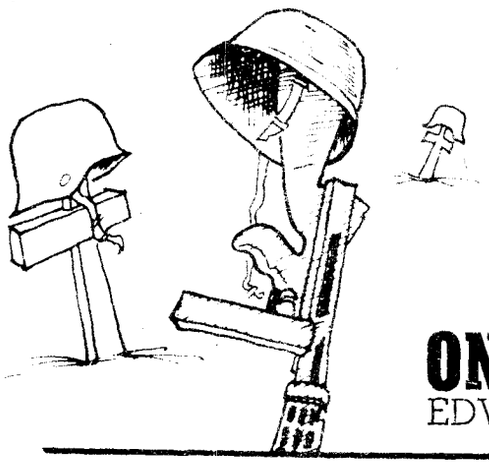


THE ABORTION DECISION: TWO YEARS LATER

RAYMOND G. DECKER
WALTER R. TRINKAUS



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ON 'HELPING' SOUTH VIETNAM

EDWARD S. HERMAN

SAUL MALOFF DEAR ALLEN, DEAR DONALD, DEAR HART
THOMAS POWERS THE PRESS: CRY WAR!
SISYPHUS HOW NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS
MICHAEL NOVAK CAMPAIGNING WITH SHRIVER
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. DYING LAUGHING
MICHAEL ZEIK TOM MERTON: MONKS'-EYE VIEWS
ROBERT LEITER THE OTHER KOSTELANETZ
TODD GITLIN THE LEFT AND ITS DILEMMAS

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NEWS & VIEWS

Lovable (?) Irish

Murray Kempton didn't cotton to fellow-writer Pete Hamill's advice to new New York Governor Hugh Carey: *Be an Irishman.*

"Please, Governor, spare us," Kempton wrote in the *Village Voice.* In his view, identification with the Irish as a class would be fatal to any social conscience that survives in Carey after those years with the Ways and Means Committtee. Kempton's anti-Hibernian logic:

"The Irish are most fit to govern in functions that place them candidly on the side of the oppressors. What benevolence they have comes out best on the side of despotism. . .

"The Kennedys, I am afraid, quite innocently beguiled too many of us into the delusion that the Irish have a special feeling for the unfortunate. I had hoped that the spectacle of Daniel Patrick Moynihan would by now have loosened the grip of that notion and freed us all to think of the Irish as the finks the essential story of their rise in our society has instructed us that they are, and to return to the reality which is that the typical Irish Congressman was John Rooney, the typical Irish labor leader was Joseph P. Ryan, and the typical Irish philosopher is not, unfortunately, Hamill, Breslin, or Flaherty, but whoever is editor for the *Brooklyn Tablet*. . .

"I speak, I confess, as one who believes that, if William of Orange had lost the Battle of the Boyne, we might all of us be living under the rule of some gibbering Stuart or other.

"But even so. Who ruined Parnell? The Irish. Who sent Joyce to Trieste, O'Casey to London, and Oscar Wilde to the cold embraces of Lord Alfred Douglas? The Irish. Who blows a stranger up in a saloon where he is taking his ease after the sort of day you're likely to have in Birmingham? The Irish Republican Army. Irishmen blowing up people in saloons? Of course. The *political* history of the Irish, like that of most nations, is one long particular betrayal of those principles their posture would suggest they hold most dear. . ."

Kempton's advice to Carey: forget every opinion picked up at the father's knee.

Response was predictably irate.

"I thought Westbrook Pegler was dead," wrote James E. Ferrissey of Third Avenue.

"Please, Mr. Kempton, don't stop now. Let's next hear about all those shiftless blacks, shylocking Jews, dumb-witted Poles, and villain Italians." That from Michael O'Hara in Cocoa Beach, Fla.

From Jews came admonishment. Then, this ecumenical wish from one Hal Smith of Leroy Street: "May the Milk of Human Brotherhood curdle in your hypocritical gut!"

To Ski Is Divine

The view of America from New York's Westchester County tends to be a mite special. Hence, from the letter columns of the Mamaroneck *Daily Times*, this display of national concern. . . .

Glen Gruman, Mamaroneck: "While skiing at Vail, Colorado, President Ford is using skis made in France. Why? With all the problems of unemployment, inflation and a forthcoming depression in the country, why is Mr. Ford using imported skis? Shouldn't the President of the United States set an example in this time of crisis?

Rejoinder from George Bauer, Larchmont: "In answer to the questions in Tuesday's Forum, while skiing at Vail, President Ford used skis warmstructured by Rossignol-USA in Burlington, Vt. Also boots by Lange of Broomfield, Colo., and bindings by Burt of Stamford, Conn."

Final word from Alfred H. Greenberg, Larchmont: ". . . President Ford apparently made a point of equipping himself with all U.S. manufactured gear; the Burt Retractable binding, Lange boots, Scott poles, Roffe clothes, and presumably U.S.-made underwear as well. . ."

It's consolations like that which warm one's day.

Tomorrow in Angola

Angola's achieving of independence from Portugal next Nov. 11 will result in some necessary adjusting on the Vatican's part.

Since 1940, relations between Portugal and the Catholic Church in Angola have been governed by Concordat and Missionary Agreement between Lisbon and the Vatican.

The Missionary Agreement accorded privileged position for the Angolan Catholic Church, something almost certain to come to an end.

The United Methodist Church is leading the call for a scrapping of the Missionary Agreement, which, it argues, has "impeded the growth of Protestantism in Angola." (On that there seems no dispute. Protestants number in the tens of thousands in Angola, as compared to 2.6 million Roman Catholics.)

In 1961, many United Methodist churches and facilities were closed by the colonial government. Looking forward to independence, United Methodists are asking for the re-opening of their churches and mission stations, church tax exemption, and state aid for educational and health programs.

Odds and Ends

— Recognizing a social travesty when it sees one, the *Courier-Journal*, Rochester diocesan newsweekly, has protested against laws that permit news media to report results of lotteries and horse races. The *Courier-Journal* wants to include bingo results.

— Typo or editorial point, which? *The Times* of London has noted the death at the Carmelite Monastery, Reading, of Sister Louise of Jesus, she "fortified by the Rights of Holy Church."

JOHN DEEDY

Vadillo, *Siempre*, Mexico

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CORRESPONDENCE

People Power

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: I am grateful for Russell Gibbons' eloquent and compassionate account of how the poor people of West Virginia feel about someone else running their schools and choosing their textbooks [Dec. 6]. We in the Boston area have also seen our share of battered school buses and bomb threats this fall.

But I think the story goes even deeper. We cannot condone either the racism of South Boston or the obscurantism of the West Virginia "creekers." But if poor people, here or there, black or white, had the power to make their own decisions and plan their own community's lives, I believe much of the root cause of both forms of bigotry would be eliminated. Prejudice is a system of repressed rage, violated dignity and despairing powerlessness. People who are condescended to, whether by political or educational pros, will strike back at the nearest target at hand.

As our societal crisis deepens in America nothing will please our rulers more than to see ordinary people bashing each other instead of directing their hostility toward the right target—the corporate elites under whom both Roxbury and South Boston, Charleston and Cabin Creek are fiefdoms to be kept at each other's throats.

HARVEY G. COX

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: Russell W. Gibbons' "Textbooks in the Hollows" [Dec. 6] strikes a well aimed blow against the enlightened arrogance that has gone so far in separating the family and natural human communities from the educational process. Of course one must say that one deplores the violence attendant upon the protest in Kanawha County, West Virginia, and one does; just as one deplored the violence that attended the struggle for community control of schools here in Brooklyn. At

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'GOD INVENTED US'

The Appeal for Theological Affirmation, issued in Hartford at the end of January by an ecumenical committee of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant (predominantly Lutheran) theologians, is one of the more interesting, remarkable and historically significant religious statements since the effulgence of popular theology that accompanied the crest of Vatican II. Focusing on the narrow but fundamental question of God's relationship to his creation, it is an attempt to "draw the line" on a few key issues of belief at a time when too much religious discussion seems to be slipping into either irrational and anti-intellectual fundamentalism or an uncritical embrace of a secular humanism.

Drawn up at the initiative of Pastor Richard J. Neuhaus and religious sociologist Peter Berger of *Worldview*, reshaped in discussions with men like William Sloan Coffin, Jr. of Yale, Avery Dulles, S.J., of the new Washington-based Woodstock Center, Father Gerard Sloyan of Temple and Lutheran Professor Robert Wilken of Notre Dame, and organized as a series of thirteen "superficially attractive," "false" but "pervasive" themes followed by brief paragraphs of contrary affirmation, the statement is inspired and held together by the conviction that: "Today an apparent loss of a sense of the transcendent is undermining the Church's ability to address with clarity and courage the urgent tasks to which God calls it in the world." If the distinction between religious and human goals and experience is lost, the authors fear, God will become no more than a projection of human aspirations; Jesus will seem simply a reflection of cultural notions of human excellence; and salvation will be no more than the perfection of the human community. The Appeal affirms: *"We did not invent God; God invented us."* And we must worship God because he *is*, not just to promote our own "self-realization." Nor should all religions be viewed as "equally valid," for to ignore contradictions sacrifices truth and obscures the meaning of Christian faith.

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On social action the Appeal rejects both that exaggerated emphasis on God's transcendence that allows some to "withdraw into religious privatism or individualism" and also the utopianism that encourages others to expect that imperfect human beings can create a perfect society, or that the struggle for a better humanity can somehow bring about the Kingdom of God. Meanwhile the church must determine its own agenda, based on its own perception of God's will.

The statement is interesting for what it is *not*. It is not a creed, because the signers, with all their differences, already share a creed. Nor do the authors specify who their adversaries are, or attempt to deal with some of the more divisive doctrinal questions raised indirectly in the text: Is God so "transcendent" as to exclude the suggestion by some process theologians, who connect human history and the divine life, that God interacts with and changes with the world? Nor is there any affirmation of or reference to the "divinity" of Christ. Nor does the affirmation that "God raised Jesus from the dead" commit the signers to a belief in the empty tomb or any particular interpretation of what "resurrection" is.

The document is also remarkable in that it enunciates the shared convictions of a varied group of moderate-liberal religious leaders, some of whom have been accused of veering close to some of the positions the Appeal rejects. But the most significant aspect of the Appeal is that these leaders, several of whom have outstanding reputations for their commitment to social justice, found this statement necessary at this time. In general, we do not care for the negative, *Syllabus of Errors* approach to theological discussion; but we do not interpret the Appeal as a retreat from either creative theologizing or political action. We hope it means a clearing of the decks for tougher battles, a return to the essential point from which more difficult dialogues may spring, and a notice to an increasingly materialistic and selfish dominant culture that the church is not just a joiner but a judge.

MAISIE WARD

The death of Maisie Ward terminates the long and fruitful career of a singular woman, but only in the most literal of senses does it bring to an end the influences of her life. Maisie Ward will be remembered and revisited through her books and other writings so long as civilized man places a value on those individuals and human concerns to which she devoted so much intellectual, spiritual and physical energy. Her studies of Chesterton and the Brownings assure this by themselves. But there are also the long shelves of books that carry the Sheed & Ward publishing imprint; the lives touched, the causes assisted, from the restoration of literary shrines in one part of the world to relief of hunger in another. Maisie Ward left her mark on places and people, and all are the better for it.

Commonweal is especially grateful to Maisie Ward, for the magazine has benefited in numerous respects by her existence. She appeared frequently in these pages from 1934-1971; she provided us with an editor at one period in our history; she shared with us and the rest of Western Christendom her remarkable husband. For this and more we speak a prayerful thanks.

Watergate only underlined the importance of the press in a democratic society and the need for constant scrutiny as to how well it is playing its role. This week marks the start of a new column in these pages, one devoted to the press, and conducted by Thomas Powers, recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 1971, author of The War at Home, *and a previous contributor to this magazine. Mr. Powers will write in every second issue, joining company with our other regular columnists, Abigail McCarthy and Michael Novak (General), Sisyphus (Washington), Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr. (Screen), Gerald Weales (Stage), Michael Murray (TV), Saul Maloff and Mark Taylor (Literary), and Frank Getlein (Cultural Affairs).*

WASHINGTON REPORT

HOW NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS

The inquiry into CIA domestic operations shows signs of growing stale. It is lacking the punch that generates successful investigations such as the Watergate exposures that sent a President into exile and some of his scurvy crew to jail.

The Watergate investigation was successful because it was a beneficiary of cooperative elements in Washington political life. The two reporters for the *Washington Post*, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, could not have hacked it alone, just as Seymour Hersh, the *New York Times* reporter currently writing about purported domestic misdeeds of the CIA, cannot. Bernstein and Woodward benefited in ways essential to expose wrongdoing in Washington. For example, they enjoyed editorial support from their own paper, which Hersh does not. The *Post* has always been willing to believe the worst about Nixon, but not about the CIA. In addition, the first few *Post* articles made it clear that the burglary at the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate office building was not just the doings of a couple of miscreants

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trying to keep busy, but actually was, in the cliché of the newsroom, an affair that reached "into high places." Consequently, politicians, press and laymen recognized the familiar strands of political corruption and responded predictably. National politicians of diverse political outlooks ultimately recognized the mess Nixon had responsibility for and responded like all good cops chasing robbers. The civil libertarian community took up the chant —"We Want Nixon." Bernstein and Woodward also had the benefit of "Deep Throat," an unidentified source who attained an allegorical cast. Whether Deep Throat consisted of a single person or more than one, "it" provided a feed of clues for the two *Post* reporters. The federal court played a more vital role. "Maximum" John Sirica, a federal judge known for his stiff sentencing, held one Watergate conspirator's head under water until he squealed on the others. Senator Ervin picked up the scent. Consequently, there was played out a repetitive drama in American political life, good guys against bad guys, and no in-betweens.

In contrast, the CIA affair has no Deep Throat, only a reflexive action on the part of major sections of government to put the matter in the Deep Freeze on the elusive, imprecisely defined grounds of "national security." There is no instant villain to focus on—no Nixon, only shadowy agents provocateurs directed by a modern Napoleonic Fouché, and a former CIA Director, Richard Helms, very "preppie" and protected by his old school-tie Cold War warrior chums in Congress and in the press. Still another element is missing that was present in the Watergate scandals. Unlike corruption, the public is fascinated, not repelled, by spies and spying. It thrill as it watches the CIA-spy movie, *Scorpio*. As the public reasons, "they" have spies and so should we.

For these reasons, Hersh, the prize-winning *Times* reporter who exposed the cover-up of the Mylai massacre, is running short of new material for his newest effort. The *Washington Post* has reportorially tried to catch up with the grey, soggy newspaper giant. But its assigned reporter, Laurence Stern, is suffering from the same lack of nourishment. He, too, like Hersh, should sue his paper for editorial non-support. The *Post*, usually quick to point a reproving finger, is keeping its hands at its side on this one and it's fair enough to point out that Philip Geyelin, editor of the *Post*'s editorial page, is a former CIA employe.

Basically, the CIA affair is a complex and slippery one to handle. There are legitimate intelligence-gathering functions for it to assume. There are grey areas within which it's a judgment call as to whether the task belongs to the CIA, or the FBI, or both. The cooperation of the Executive Branch, particularly the President's, will be vital in order to conduct a thorough congressional inquiry. But this looks unlikely. And, the affair showed signs late last month of being overshadowed by articles in the *Washington Post* that will eventually allege that Presidents, including Lyndon Johnson, misused the FBI for purposes of throttling political opponents in their own party.

So all in all, for reporters nosey about the CIA, it's like shoveling sand against the tide.

Nevertheless, it's encouraging that the Senate has agreed to establish a select committee to look into all intelligence operations of the federal government, including the CIA and FBI. A few years ago, the old-timers in the Senate wouldn't have permitted an investigation. But they're fewer in numbers and the climate has changed somewhat by the fresh air brought through the revolving doors by newly elected Senators during the last six years.

But the game is not yet won. Whether the new select committee will do its full duty is uncertain. Several days before the 11-member committee was established by the Senate, Senator Scott of Pennsylvania, Minority Leader, identified the names of the five Republicans he planned to appoint. Among them were Senators Goldwater and Tower, who support almost any atrocity as long as it's wrapped in the American flag. This was an effort to force Senator Mansfield, the Majority Leader, to name his wild-and-woolies, outspoken critics of the CIA to the committee in hopes of discrediting its labors in advance. Undeterred, Mansfield appointed six Democrats after the Senate authorized the committee by a bipartisan vote of eighty-two to four. Regardless of the views of and competence of investigating Senators, good staffing on a committee can produce effective results. Bad staffing can make well-meaning Senators ineffective and good staffing can force the hand of balky or ineffective Senators.

Hopefully, the new select committee will do better than the existing permanent committees who have had reasons to ask the CIA what it's up to. They haven't been doing the job.

Take the matter of a memo from Tom Huston, a member of the White House staff during the Nixon presidency. Huston's memo states that in 1970 Nixon had approved domestic surveillance of Americans. The memo further states that officials of intelligence agencies of the government, including the CIA, met to discuss the project. Huston then writes: "I went into this exercise fearful that CIA would refuse to cooperate. In fact, Dick Helms was most cooperative and helpful."

Yet when Helms, now Ambassador to Iran, appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee late last month to explain his stewardship of the CIA, as a result of the Hersh articles, the Huston memo was not discussed. The Committee, as a whole, took a dive. Senator Church asked a few penetrating questions. Senator Case expressed again his long-standing discontent about the domestic side of CIA. Otherwise, zilch. At this writing, the transcript of the hearing, held in executive session, has not been "sanitized" and the remnants pub-

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lished. But, from all accounts, the questioning was comparable to the caliber of the questioning before the same Committee when Helms appeared in early 1973 before it for confirmation as Ambassador to Iran.

Informed spectators at hearings are consistently depressed at the ineptness and superficiality of most questions asked witnesses by members of Congress. The Helms nomination hearing is typical.

Helms was asked, "Did you try in the Central Intelligence Agency to overthrow the Government of Chile?" He replied, "No, sir." That was not the relevant question. No one claimed the CIA had. The germane question not asked was whether the CIA had attempted to prevent Allende from being elected President by the Chilean Congress by such means as persuading American business interests to refuse to sell materials and to refuse credit to Chile. Such refusals would presumably create sufficient economic unrest that would cause the military to intervene to prevent Allende from becoming President.

At another point in his confirmation hearing, Helms said: "We don't go around giving them (American companies) extended briefings about the condition of the world or anything of this kind." However, four pages later in the public hearing record, this statement of Helms is found: "As you well know, sir, the American companies have access to us, as they do to other people in the U.S. Government, and ITT was talking to a lot of people in the U.S. Government in those days and they didn't like the trends that were going on down there (Chile) and were consulting with a host of people, including the Agency—a lot of this came out in the (Jack) Anderson papers—but there was no exchange of money between us. We didn't collaborate with ITT except to exchange this information back and forth about the course of events." Helms was not asked to explain the contradiction between those two statements of his. Nor was he asked to explain the possibility that William Broe, a top CIA clandestine operator, may have been the "visitor" referred to in an ITT internal office memo, dated September 29, 1970, who tried to persuade ITT officials to upset the Chilean economy.

Once, when asked about CIA's black-arts Domestic Operations Division, Helms replied in terms of a different unit of CIA, the Domestic Contact Service, which among its other responsibilities, interviews Americans after they return from traveling in Communist countries.

Other responses of Helms were fudged as to domestic surveillance by the CIA. Howard Hunt testified that as a CIA employe in 1964 he was assigned to monitor the Republican presidential candidate's activities and to carry this information to the CIA liaison officer at the White House where President Johnson waited. The Committee did not inquire about that. And, so, by design or dull-wittedness of the congressional committee members, the wool is pulled further and further down over congressional eyes—and the public's!

The new select committee on the CIA has an opportunity to rehabilitate the congressional reputation for often playing patsy for witnesses. The literature on the CIA is incomplete and sometimes deliberately misleading. It seems that CIA is organized into four divisions. Two of these are operational divisions—intelligence and plans. The latter is today a troublesome one, whatever its accomplishments during the Cold War. It was the Plans Division that supervised the overthrow of Premier Mossadegh of Iran and Arbenz in Guatemala. It also put together the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the development of the high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, the U-2. The argument that should be advanced is that the CIA establishes general policy through its Plans Division because it is able to conduct such operations without restrictions from the highest political offices of the federal government. The President, it should be understood, is quarantined from knowledge of such operations. A "Committee of Forty," consisting of representatives from CIA, State, Justice and Defense departments and others, was established to supervise CIA's high-risk operations. Henry Kissinger, as presidential foreign policy adviser, was most recently the chairman of the Committee of Forty. Now Secretary of State, Kissinger may still be chairman.

During his confirmation hearing, Helms discussed the clandestine Committee. He made it clear that a President is not kept informed of risky business. "There has been a committee (of 40) at a high political (sic!) level established to clear these operations (Helms testified) and that does *not* include the President, and obviously—one of the reasons for this is that under our system of government, which is not like the parliamentary system where a Prime Minister comes out on a moment's notice, there has to be some kind of a circuit breaker for the President in a whole series of matters, and this Committee was devised for that purpose."

The new Senate committee might suggest that paramilitary operations of CIA be reassigned to the Defense Department. Deprived of espionage operations, CIA would not be deprived of its principal valuable missions —gathering of intelligence and its analysis to be used by Presidents.

The future for the new committee is uncertain. It has been assigned only eight months in which to make its study and recommendations. The assignment reasonably should take two years. Service on the new committee will be politically unrewarding to individual members. And the task of the committee as a whole will be difficult. Knowledgeable witnesses who could help us understand both the needs and misdeeds of the CIA and other intelligence agencies will be more likely one with Goethe who believed, in panic over political unrest in Europe, that is it better to support a lie than admit political confusion in the States.

SISYPHUS

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CAMPAIGNING WITH SHRIVER

MICHAEL NOVAK

Richard J. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, was recently cited in the press for his leanings with respect to a Democratic presidential candidate in 1976. The name he singled out was Sargent Shriver.

That selection made memories come flooding back. It *is* a little shameful, isn't it, that Shriver has been so forgotten since 1972? In the midst of an impossible situation, after six candidates had turned George McGovern down, Shriver, like Barkis, was willing. "Being number seven on a Democratic list isn't bad," he said, "the talent is so deep. Pity the Republicans. Richard Nixon's choice was Spiro Agnew."

His airplane was called *Lucky Seven* (there are seven in his immediate family, five children, and he meant them, too). Those of us who served on it for long stretches of the ninety days from nomination to election day must surely carry as many memories of merriment, pranks, and exuberant energy as any such group in history.

To work with Shriver has always meant an enhancement of life—sheer fun and growth. It has also meant a touch of something else.

In his nomination address, Shriver insisted, against advice, on closing with a quote from Teilhard de Chardin. Professionals as diverse as Patrick Buchanan and Eugene McCarthy, knowing what the Shriver campaign would have to do, poked gentle fun at that touch of high-falutin theology. "How is Teilhard going down in Homestead?" they would ask. But that was part of Shriver, too: A touch of class, a willingness to reach, no fear of flying.

On the plane, the press and staff held contests for writing limericks, scatology not penalized. At specific moments in Shriver speeches, a journalist's toy duck would quack. Once a day, a report would be broadcast on the plane's intercom, describing the campaign from the duck's point of view. And on the very last flight across the continent, in interminable darkness, on the eve of the election, a real live white duck suddenly appeared—and quacked—and messed.

During endless cycles from Pittsburgh to Cleveland to Detroit, I saw speech cards, written laboriously, hurled in despair across the room. Closeted in the cylindric tube of a modern jet for up to sixteen hours a day (sometimes speech writers stayed aboard while the others disembarked after each short hop), we were all bone-tired, our stomachs off, our nerves ground to irritating edges by weeks of five-hour nights. Three or four times, the Secret Service rerouted us because of information about guns in crowds or along the way. The discouragements of the campaign—especially in the last two weeks—pressed proud tempers toward eruption.

It's hard for the press to travel with the losing side; hard, too, to get their tapes on the air or their columns in the paper with a vice-presidential candidate.

Some of us felt the frustration, too, which we had to hold in check, that our ticket could have done better if Shriver had been number one and McGovern number two. McGovern worked hard for where he was and we served him loyally. Yet Shriver seemed so much more in touch with the country; in crowds of many different kinds he was better able to *swing*. Shriver likes people, all kinds of people, and picks up waves of empathy in them.

In his finely tailored suits, Shriver is not in one sense "a man of the people." Yet the figure of the well-dressed ambassador to France is itself part of his fun. The Shriver family, despite some acreage in rural Maryland, has known hard and bitter times, like other small farmers. Shriver's college tuition was paid by menial work. There is a gravelly, rough, urban grit in Shriver when he talks to local party officers and workers—as on one night upon a liberally drink-watered dinner on a riverboat in Pittsburgh. It's not a side of him his wife, or the Kennedys, often see.

Journalists considerably younger than he, even pumped full of vitamins, puffed to keep up with him. In his exuberance, he made mistakes, overdramatized, became on occasion raucous. He could dance a *tarantula* at the sound of the beat—or, as in South Dakota, almost break his back by agreeing to ride an innertube pulled by a powerboat. Wherever we would go, a mile underground in a mine in Montana, a sudden stop at a Nazi party headquarters in South Chicago "to see what on earth is in their heads," Shriver showed a lovely zest for life.

He has never taken a major political risk in electoral politics, a risk of losing; backing out was not always his own choice. Whether he's tough enough is the old saw political watchers raise against him.

Having worked intimately with Shriver in two campaigns (1970 on behalf of Democratic congressmen and 1972), I cannot hold him in the mythic position of presidents I never saw up close. I know his faults, as he knows mine: weeks together in one of those flying penises is a fairly searing light. But when I think of most incumbents in the White House—not just Ford, Nixon, Johnson, but also Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and all those others—I can't help thinking Shriver would add a grace, élan, and willingness to face hard thoughts and take new starts that few other candidates around even dream of.

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THE ABORTION DECISION: TWO YEARS LATER

RAYMOND G. DECKER

More Christian Than Its Critics

Now that two years have passed since that eventful decision of the Supreme Court in *Roe* v. *Wade*, and the blinding dust of emotional reaction has somewhat subsided, hopefully the Catholic community of this country can take a more scrutinizing and less nervous look at the implications of what was said. In the past two years much has appeared in the Catholic press criticizing this decision. The tone of many of these criticisms has often been strident. Unquestionably the decision with its resultant criticisms has brought into the public forum the whole question of abortion—with all its personal, public and religious ramifications. The decision of the Court has not so much resolved the public debate on abortion as it has opened up a Pandora's box of pent-up emotions and convictions on this extremely controversial subject. This is evidenced by the fact that there is a growing effort among some to bring about a constitutional amendment which would nullify the Court's decision.

In approaching the problem of abortion from a "Catholic" point of view, a fundamental distinction must be made at the outset. That distinction lies between: 1) the norms of a personal conscience developed from deeply held Christian commitments; and 2) the norms that are to function for a society made up of a multiplicity of convictions developed from various religious and philosophical commitments. These are two quite distinct realities.

The first of these realities is the formed conscience which a Christian develops by studying, praying, meditating upon the essentials of a Christian life.

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WALTER R. TRINKAUS

Dred Scott Revisited

Father Decker argues in effect that a person (especially, in the light of Vatican II, a Catholic) who believes abortion to be immoral is not thereby required, or even morally permitted, to seek to have it abolished by law through a Constitutional Amendment. He considers the ruling of *Roe* v. *Wade*, in which the states are prohibited from recognizing a right to life at any time before birth, not only right and proper, but more in accord with Christian principles than the position of its critics.

He is right, of course, in distinguishing morality from legality. Just as making conduct legal does not make it moral, so also a belief that conduct is immoral does not always require that it be made illegal. This has been recently reiterated in Part V (Morality and Law) of the *Declaration on Procured Abortion* of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith dated November 18, 1974: "It is true that civil law cannot expect to cover the whole field of morality or to punish all faults."

But a distinction must be made between different types of immoral conduct. Our laws are replete with instances where immorality and illegality properly coincide.

For example, Father Decker's argument would have been persuasive if he had been discussing contraception instead of abortion. On the other hand, if he had been discussing (before the Civil War) slavery, the argument would be most questionable.

Consider his following language referring to *Roe* v. *Wade*: "Confronted with the diverse religious and philosophical answers given to the question of abor-

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In regard to abortion this is done by evaluating and analyzing the consistency of abortion with the deeply held principles of one's Christian faith. On this level we make decisions on the basis of Christian tradition which of its very nature involves a number of uncertainties. As certain as the abortion issue may be for modern-day Catholics, divergent positions have been held in the past by various theologians and local churches (including the Holy See) in their laws and prayers on the subject of abortion. Once determined, this tradition has to be placed up against the contemporary questions that modern theologians and Christian thinkers are asking regarding the new uncertainties surrounding abortion. After struggling with these problematics and viewing them vis-à-vis a somewhat fluctuating tradition in the Church, the Christian then decides what procedures he or she will follow, and then willingly takes his or her stand before God with those decisions. Here the Christian is the responsible agent for himself or herself, and those for whom he or she has an immediate responsibility. The conscience being formed, the Christian should follow it, and, indeed, must follow it, regardless of the direction the rest of society may choose to take.

The second area of concern, however, is quite different and it is the one I will be principally concerned about here, precisely because it seems to be that one we need most to clarify as a result of the apparently "official Catholic response" (Pastoral Message, Feb. 13, 1973) to the Supreme Court decision. Very simply it raises the question: Do we have the right to enforce through law our formed consciences (as they are developed to this point) upon the rest of society, or even on a minority in society, when the consciences of a substantial portion of society dictate principles and values other than our own? The simple response to this question (especially in the light of the decree *Dignitatis Humanae* of Vatican Council II) should be a categorical 'No.'

Catholics may be adamantly opposed to abortion because of the conscience they have developed up to this point on the sanctity of life and the methods necessary to assure that sanctity. On the other hand, by reason of their Christian understanding that free response is of the essence of human action, they should not be willing to use force (whether psychological, physical, political, or legal) to have others assent to their commitments either in whole or in part. Thus to use the law and its public force as a means of compelling others to agree with our Christian commitments regarding abortion is against the very nature of what a Christian commitment must of necessity be—namely, a free response to the Gospel tradition.

Vatican Council II was quite specific on this point. It unhesitatingly opposed the use of political and legal force to make others conform to a particular religion, and thus do violence to their consciences. This principle applies not only to forcing people to assume a whole body of religious commitments, as in the case of established religions, but even any part of those religious commitments which would do violence to the conscience of others provided that the continued existence of society can tolerate it.

This principle is easy enough to understand in the situation of a particular state identifying itself through establishment with a specific religion and so imposing it upon all within society. But when specific premises of a particular religion are enforced upon a populace of a pluralistic society, it is no less reprehensible and in violation of the fundamental principle enunciated by Vatican Council II:

"From the very origins of the Church the disciples of Christ strove to convert men to faith in Christ as the Lord—not, however, by the use of coercion or by devices unworthy of the gospel, but by the power, above all, of the Word of God. Steadfastly they proclaimed to all the plan of God our Saviour, 'who wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (I Tim. 2:4). At the same time, however, they showed respect for weaker souls even though these persons were in error. Thus they made it plain that every one of us will render an account of himself to God (Roc. 14.12), and for this reason is bound to obey his conscience."

In the light of these statements, for Catholics to seek enforcement through law of their position regarding abortion upon the rest of society, especially in the pluralistic society of our kind where consciences are formed sincerely from varying philosophical and religious sources, is reprehensible and militates against the basic Christian principle that anyone's acceptance of Christianity (whether in whole or in part) must be free and spontaneous, not forced and contrived.

This is precisely the importance and significance of the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*; namely, to protect the right of individual consciences as this right must be weighed against the legitimate interests of society. I would say in this regard, that the Court's decision in its basic concerns is more in accord with fundamental Christian principles, and

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certainly far more judicious in its projections, than the positions reflected in the rather strident criticisms it has received from certain Catholic sources. Although one can take serious exception to some of the historical *obiter dicta* of the decision, and even to some of the substantive decisions regarding the state's interests in the danger to the mother in advancing stages of pregnancy, it is difficult to comprehend how the basic thrust of the decision in its concern to protect the right of conscience ("right to privacy" in legal terms) can be so severely criticized by those purporting to adhere to basic Christian beliefs.

From the very start the decision takes into account the indisputable fact that there exists a deep religious-philosophical diversity of opinion over the question of abortion. It acknowledges that, as a matter of fact, there exist in our society vastly different answers posed to such questions as: Is abortion the taking of human life? When does human life commence in the embryo? In the words of the Court:

"We forthwith acknowledge our awareness of the sensitive and emotional nature of the abortion controversy, of the vigorous opposing views, even among physicians, and of the deep and seemingly absolute convictions that the subject inspires.

"One's philosophy, one's experiences, one's exposure to the raw edges of human existence, one's religious training, one's attitudes toward life and family and their values, and the moral standards one establishes and seeks to observe, are all likely to influence and to color one's thinking and conclusions about abortion."

In the light of this factual situation of divergent views based on a variety of rationales (some philosophical, some religious, some simply experiential), the Court reminds itself of its duty to a religiously and philosophically pluralistic society by calling to mind the admonition of Mr. Justice Holmes in his dissenting opinion in *Lochner* v. *New York* (198 U.S. 45, 76,1905):

"It (the Constitution) is made for the people of fundamentally differing views, and the accident of our finding certain opinions natural and familiar or novel and even shocking ought not to conclude our judgment upon the question whether statutes embodying them conflict with the Constitution of the United States."

Confronted with the divergent religious and philosophical answers given to the question of abortion in our pluralistic society, and admonished by Justice Holmes of its responsibility as the protector of constitutional rights, the Court rightly exempted itself from deciding these religious and/or philosophical questions:

"We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

Could the Court have taken any other position without aligning the state with one religious or philosophical answer over another, and so itself have violated the First Amendment of the Constitution by officially accepting one particular position and enforcing it upon all in society? Its decision not to resolve for legal purposes the highly controverted questions revolving around abortion, in effect exempted the State from answering the religious and philosophical questions and placed the resolution of these questions in the conscience of the individual citizen. The court in taking this stand decided that at this time no univocal solution should be imposed by the State. This legally meant that the State has the obligation to protect an individual person in the exercise of his or her conscience regarding the difficult questions surrounding abortion. By pre-empting the State's right to impose a univocal solution to the question of abortion, the Court really said that the State has neither an absolute right to prohibit abortion nor any right to enforce abortion. It basically protects the individual in the exercise of his or her conscience.

After recognizing the existence of conflicting convictions in our society, and acknowledging its responsibility to uphold the provisions of Amendments One, Four, Five, Nine and Fourteen of the Constitution protecting the right of personal privacy, the Court decided that it must protect the free expression of conscience in the arena of religio-philosophical controversy by not enforcing upon an individual citizen one position over the other through the force of law.

In its decision in *Roe* v. *Wade* the Supreme Court achieved the ideal expressed by Vatican Council II in *Dignitatis Humanae* by safeguarding personal privacy in the exercise of one's conscience regarding the extremely controversial subject of abortion. By stating that "we do not agree that, by adopting one theory of life, Texas may override the rights of the pregnant woman that are at stake," the Court is articulating the philosophy that in the context of a pluralistic society one philosophy, one religion or one moral position (especially when in such controversy) should not take precedence by becoming the official position espoused by the State through its laws. By taking

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this position the Court safeguards the right of conscience against the impingements of the State in those areas which are of a deeply philosophical or religious nature.

Apparently what some Catholics fail to understand is that by taking this position the Court has likewise protected their conscience from State encroachments. In its function as protector of the constitutional safeguards for the exercise of conscience, oddly enough the Court has taken a truly Christian stance—one in accord with the most fundamental of Christian moral principles:

"On his part, man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience faithfully, in order than he may come to God, for whom he was created. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience especially in matters religious." (*Dignitatis Humanae*)

A truly Christian position should be to protect a person in the exercise of his or her conscience and to resist social controls that would infringe upon or obliterate free choice especially in the areas of philosophical or religious commitments. The decision of the Court is very much in accord with this position, because if it had decided that the State could establish laws prohibiting all abortions except in the rarest of circumstances, (e.g., to save the life of the mother) then it would in effect have given to the State the right to decide through law the position the citizenry should take on the delicate problem of abortion. If the State were granted this procedural right then it could in the future reverse its substantive decision and demand that certain persons submit themselves to abortion when civil needs or social consensus would so demand, even though abortion might be contrary to their conscience. By protecting the right of personal privacy in the exercise of one's conscience relative to abortion against the powers of the State, the Supreme Court protected the right of the Catholic to the exercise of his or her conscience as well as the right of those who hold a contrary position.

Nor did the Court in its decision go as far as to say that the right to freedom of conscience in regard to the question of abortion is so absolute as not to have certain qualifications. Recognizing the importance of this right, and taking every step to preserve it from State encroachments, the Court at the same time saw the need of balancing this right with certain social interests which must direct its use. In the words of the Court:

"Although the results (of the courts' decisions) are divided, most of these courts have agreed that the right of privacy, however based, is broad enough to cover the abortion decision; that the right, nonetheless, is not absolute and is subject to some limitations; and that at some point the state interests as to protection of health, medical standards and prenatal life, become dominant."

In working out the delicate balance between the right of personal privacy and legitimate social interests in an individual's private conscience, the Court recognized three areas of legitimate concern for the State: 1) protection of maternal health; 2) maintenance of medical standards and 3) preservation of prenatal life. It is interesting to note that the Court recognized the State's responsibility to be concerned about future life in the sense of protecting prenatal life, not destroying it. It allowed the State the right to protect fetal life even against the conscience of an individual who would destroy it; on the other hand, the Court does not admit to the State's right to destroy fetal life against the conscience of an individual who wants to preserve it. When analyzing the State's concern for fetal life, the Court puts the right in the positive framework of preservation, and not in the negative sense of a right to destroy fetal life: "If the State is interested in protecting fetal life after viability, it may go so far as to proscribe abortion during that period except when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother."

Destruction of fetal life, therefore, must come from the exercise of a personal and private conscience, not as the exercise of the State's compelling interest. This puts the Court in a position of supporting a pro-life attitude as a state policy, and yet at the same time recognizing and protecting the rights of an individual's conscience when in the concreteness of their circumstances their conscience dictates that fetal life should be terminated.

The Court, therefore, works out a delicate balance between the exercise of private conscience on the one hand, and legitimate State interest in the preservation of life on the other. Both are important values, and both are extremely difficult to delineate in the setting of a pluralistic society. Yet I would contend that the Court has done a remarkable job in working through this delicate balance, for in the kernel of its decision it has given recognition to both values: "We therefore conclude that the right of personal privacy includes the abortion decision, but that this right is not unqualified and must be con-

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MORE CHRISTIAN

sidered against important state interests in regulation."

Because the Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* squares with such fundamental Christian principles as the right of conscience, legitimate social interests in the exericse of conscience, and a basically pro-life stance as social policy, the Catholic press should have praised this decision instead of condemning it. It would be hoped that the Catholic community in this country would exercise a little better judgment than it has in the recent past by understanding that by safeguarding the exercise of individual conscience the "Catholic position" as well as other positions are protected under this decision. The Court, although committing the State to a basically pro-life stance, is at the same time prescinding from the religio-philosophical debate which is presently going on, by protecting the right of individuals to function in accord with their own positions consistent with their own philosophical or religious commitments. Has the Catholic community so soon forgotten the philosophy articulated in Vatican Council II's Declaration on Religious Freedom? Is the Catholic community so myopic that insistence upon its prevailing abortion position has forced it to lose sight of other values such as freedom of conscience, and the State's obligation to assure religious freedom? Hopefully the vision of the American Catholic community will become broader, and in a real sense more Christian, so as to include some of the other deeply important values considered by the Court in its decision on the abortion issue.

DRED SCOTT

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tion [slavery] in our pluralistic society . . . the Court rightly exempted itself from deciding these religious and/or philosophical questions."

Before the Civil War, the country was deeply divided on the religious and philosophical questions pertaining to slavery. But when the Supreme Court had an opportunity to confront those questions, it refused to do so, and *Dred Scott* v. *Sanford* became infamous as a result. A devastating war and the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution eventually overcame the failure of the Court to meet the underlying principles involved in basic human rights.

The present issue, then, appears clear: Is abortion to be classed with contraception, or is it in the same category as slavery? (Or, to focus the issue more precisely, is abortion more closely related to contraception or to infanticide?)

The controlling difference between contraception on one hand and slavery or infanticide on the other is that the latter involve an attack on the fundamental rights of persons. There is an identifiable victim. In contraception, however, there is no living victim.

In recent years, there has emerged a growing movement toward eliminating from our penal laws conduct referred to as "crimes without victims," and the suggestion is made that the law withdraw from such activity as sexual conduct between consenting adults, obscenity and the use or possession of the milder drugs. While all human conduct affects society or other persons at least indirectly and in some degree ("No man is an island"), we can in a general way distinguish those activities in which there is no direct victim.

But no one has seriously proposed that the law abandon its strictures on crimes *with* victims (murder, rape, theft, etc.,) despite the fact that they are also prohibited by the Ten Commandments. Therefore, the issue, once again, is whether there is a "victim" in an abortion.

The moral argument against abortion is based on the premise that there *is* a victim—a tiny, helpless, innocent human being whose very life is being taken for the convenience of others. Whether this life is considered a "person" or simply a "human life" (or even a living entity with the potentiality for humanity) it is undeniably an existing living victim immeasurably different from ununited egg and sperm cells.

Consequently, just as a person in 1850 who believed, contrary to the belief of many others, that a human being of African descent was a person with all of the basic rights of mankind had no choice but to seek the abolition of slavery by law, including, if necessary, a constitutional amendment, so also a person today who believes that the existing but unborn child is a person with all of the basic rights of mankind has no choice but to seek the abolition of abortion by law, including a constitutional amendment. In doing so, he is not trying to impose his

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own religious or philosophical views on others (as he could be charged with doing if he sought to outlaw contraception), but is seeking only to protect human beings by the millions whose right to life is in jeopardy.

Those who have fought the battle against racial discrimination in recent years have not held back in fear of imposing their religious and philosophical views on others who held different views. Nor have they refrained from asking the legislatures and the courts to take a position.

What is overlooked in the reasoning of *Roe* v. *Wade* is that the Supreme Court, despite its disclaimer, did take a position. The nature of the issue (involving basic human rights) was such that inaction is itself action; abstention is a denial of rights. The Court held that the unborn human being is not a person, conceding that if it is a person, its right to life would prevail over the right of privacy of its mother. This is a position bearing on philosophical if not religious principles. (Legally, the term "person" means "bearer of rights." Philosophically, the true significance of the term recognizes that a human being is immeasurably above and apart from all other forms of existence. Religiously, many believe that human beings are persons because they are created in the image of God.) But the Court refused to consider the issue as one requiring a determination based on reality, and reached its conclusion by precisely the same sterile method of reasoning used by Chief Justice Taney in *Dred Scott*, namely, the prevalence of a practice at the time the constitutional provisions were adopted. *Dred Scott* pointed to the prevalence of slavery when the Declaration of Independence was pronounced and the Constitution adopted, and held that neither document, therefore, could be interpreted to refer in their recitation of rights to Negroes. Mr. Justice Blackmun in *Roe* v. *Wade* claimed that there was a prevalence of abortion at the time of the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, and concluded that the unborn were therefore not protected by the Amendment. That is a position: a denial of rights and a sentence of death to millions. (It is noteworthy that a majority of the Court did not deem themselves precluded from holding capital punishment laws unconstitutional despite the prevalence of capital punishment when the Eighth Amendment was enacted. [*Furman* v. *Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238]).

The Court took a position also when it refused to conclude that the unborn life is a human life, as an issue distinct from personhood. What it held in effect was that there is considerable dispute as to the nature of this life with the result that the states should be prohibited from protecting that life. In short, if in doubt, you can kill it. This is a position.

The conclusion from the foregoing is that the nature of the abortion controversy is such that the Court could not absolve itself from the necessity of taking a position as to the nature of fetal life, and, in fact, did take a position by holding that it is not worthy of the law's protection. Moreover, the abortion controversy is such that those who do believe that abortion is wrong because it involves the most serious invasion possible of the basic right of existing human beings have no alternative but to seek laws, including constitutional provisions, to protect these lives.

Those who seek to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade* by a constitutional amendment want to extend the due process and equal protection clauses to prenatal life. These clauses are used to protect the basic rights of all persons, particularly the weak, the helpless, the unpopular, and the minorities, from the powerful and the majority. Not only are there clear differences of opinion in our diverse society concerning the desirability of many of these protections, but in a large number of instances, constitutional protection is given contrary to prevailing opinion. The various protective rules for those charged with crime, for example, as well as the restrictions on capital punishment, are generally unpopular.

Nevertheless, when basic rights are at stake, the Court frequently has not hesitated to ignore public opinion. When fundamental rights are threatened, a Gallup Poll is irrelevant. Moreover, in these instances of concern for rights, the Court has necessarily been influenced by the philosophical principles of its members.

Accordingly, if we believe that an unborn child actually is a person with rights, we are obligated in conscience to do our utmost to protect the life of that person by law, notwithstanding a substantial mentality in our country which is willing to accept abortion as an answer to life's problems. Actually, the very fact that there is this widespread acceptance of abortion is what requires the imposition of legal and constitutional protection. This is the function of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment.

And even as to those moral issues which do not involve victims, the position of Father Decker goes too far. A belief that the law should abstain from prohibiting so-called "victimless" activity does not lead to the conclusion that others are precluded from speaking out in favor of such laws under

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penalty of being charged with inflicting their philosophical and religious beliefs on others. Laws do reflect the moral attitudes of society, and all of the members of society are entitled to express their views according to their own principles. To hold otherwise would be to say, for example, that those who believe the laws of the land should reflect the "Playboy philosophy" may be heard, but the opposition must remain silent. This does not seem extraordinarily fair.

Father Decker's discussion pertaining to the right of conscience fails to distinguish a conscience which *prohibits* some practice from one which *permits* the practice.

For example, if one's conscience would permit the use of hardcore pornography, a law prohibiting this material would not violate a right of conscience. (Some might argue that it violates a right of free expression, but that is not conscience.)

On the other hand, a law which requires a person to do something contrary to his conscience would violate this right. It might be argued, for example, that laws compelling an anti-abortion taxpayer to contribute to the payment for abortions violates his right of conscience. But a law which prohibits abortion would not violate a right of conscience.

Father Decker's article implies that the historical material set out in length in the opinion, as well as the arbitrary three trimester divisions of pregnancy, are open to question. Indeed they are. The Court prohibited the states from recognizing a right to life in the unborn child at any time before birth. The Court leaves the abortion decision to the judgment of the pregnant woman and her physician for the first three months of pregnancy, ignoring completely the uncontroverted fact that there is a living human entity in existence at three months with a detectable heartbeat and recordable brain waves. For the second three months, during a period of rapid fetal development, the state may take such steps as are necessary to protect maternal health, but may not protect the unborn child. And even in the last three months, right up until the moment of birth, the Court refuses to recognize a right to life, though it does perceive a valid state interest in the "potentiality of life" at this point.

But this recognition of state interest is rendered meaningless by the exception that it does not extend to preserving such potentiality of life if an abortion is required to preserve the life or *health* of the mother. In *Doe* v. *Bolton*, the companion case to *Roe* v. *Wade*, the Court approved the view that the mother's health is construed to bear upon her psychological as well as her physical well-being and agreed that "the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient." The Court added: "All these factors may relate to health. This allows the attending physician the room he needs to make his best medical judgment. And it is room that operates for the benefit, not the disadvantage, of the pregnant woman."

In other words, even in the last three months of pregnancy, if there is a medical judgment that an abortion is called for because of physical, emotional, psychological, familial factors, or because of the woman's age, it must be allowed.

Is it any wonder that there has been a loud and persistent outcry against these abortion decisions? Is it any wonder that those who view abortion as the taking of innocent human lives are calling for a constitutional amendment to overcome these decisions, just as amendments were required to overcome the institution of slavery? Justice Blackmun himself has been quoted as saying that *Roe* v. *Wade* "will be regarded as one of the worst mistakes in the Court's history or one of its great decisions, a turning point." Those who consider it a grievous mistake should not be told to remain silent.

REBUTTALS

RAYMOND G. DECKER

Professor Trinkaus does us the favor of drawing into clear relief the central issue in this debate. Throughout his rebuttal he assumes that fetal life is the life of a human person, and by such assumption misses the main thrust and true value of *Roe* v. *Wade*. Time and again he assumes *his* answer to the question, "When does the life of a human person begin?" In his mind there is no doubt on this issue, and therefore the law (whether decisional, constitutional or statutory) should enforce his scientific, philosophical and/or religious conviction on all of society.

At every juncture of his rebuttal he assumes that there can be only one answer to that one basic question: "The controlling difference between contraception on the one hand and slavery or infanticide on the other is that the latter involves an

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attack on the fundamental *rights of persons.*" "The moral argument against abortion is based on the premise that there is a victim—a tiny, helpless, innocent human being whose very life is being taken for the convenience of others." This is simply the classical situation of "begging the question."

It is precisely this scientific, philosophical and religious assumption that the Court in *Roe* v. *Wade* does not enforce upon the whole of society. Indeed in its decision the Court *did* (in the words of Professor Trinkaus) take a position. Substantively it was the position that because there is obvious doubt (scientific, philosophic and religious) as to exactly when the life of the human person begins, the Court will respect the various positions and religious consciences and not enforce through law one position over another. It is not the function nor prerogative of the Court to resolve philosophical, scientific, or theological questions which are so much in public debate as that concerning the beginning of a human person. "When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

To equate *Roe* v. *Wade* with the Dred Scott decision is to miss the substantive issue involved in the former. The fact of the matter is that *Roe v. Wade* is dealing with the question of human instance in quite a different context than the Dred Scott decision. The former deals with the existence of human life in the context of embryonic life, the latter dealt with the existence of human life in the institution of slavery. To equate these decisions is to miss the very point of *Roe* v. *Wade*—that in the situation of scientific and philosophical controversy of the proportions of abortion the Court is quite outside its prerogative in making that decision. Had the Dred Scott decision taken that position it would have well avoided being the superficially devised decision it was.

As Professor Trinkaus points out, "In a large number of instances, constitutional protection is given contrary to prevailing opinion," implying that the Court in this case should have gone against the prevailing doubt on this issue and apodictically resolved the question. However, it should be pointed out that in recent years where the Court has had to deal with a more broadly pluralistic society it has enforced constitutional protection contrary to prevailing opinion, only on procedural matters, or in substantive areas which have a social impact, but not in areas which involve rendering apodictic answers to unresolved scientific, philosophical, or religious questions.

Professor Trinkaus is correct when he says that I question the historical material set out in the opinion as well as the arbitrary three trimester division of pregnancy. This only indicates that I do not consider this to be a *perfect* decision. However, I argue for the basic thrust of the decision which legally protects the varying positions on that most difficult of metaphysical questions—when *does* the human person really begin to exist as a person?

Apart from its *obiter dicta, Roe* v. *Wade* in its substantial position recognizes and respects the fact that this is still a question for many, and thus it should not impose a specific answer upon all. Professor Trinkaus states that those who consider abortion as a grievous mistake should not be required to remain silent. I could not agree more, for this is precisely what *Roe* v. *Wade* preserves—that no one need remain silent with regard to this question—those who do not consider it grievous as well as those who do. I would caution Professor Trinkaus and many of those associated with the "Right to Life Movement" that in the insistence upon their apodictic certainty they are placing in jeopardy the philosophic, religious and even scientific convictions of others. If this is not an open question in the mind of Professor Trinkaus (which it obviously is not by his constant underlying assumption), at least in the wisdom of *Roe v. Wade* it is still an open question in our society.

Perhaps some day there will be sufficient evidence to make a more clear and distinct decision on this most difficult of questions. Until that time let us abide by the social wisdom articulated in *Roe* v. *Wade* which allows for the reality of sincere and conscionable doubt. The position articulated by Professor Trinkaus harks back to the spirit of the Inquisition in which people were not allowed to doubt; the position taken in *Roe* v. *Wade* protects an open society that is able to tolerate differing opinions and even protects doubt and question.

From a practical point of view the Catholic community, instead of dissipating its financial and personnel energies on fighting the hopeless issue of a constitutional amendment, should seek to protect the rights of all under the provisions laid out in *Roe* v. *Wade*. For example, the Catholic community could best serve it own interests and altruistically the interests of others by using its resources in championing the cause of many welfare mothers. According to the basic principle of *Roe* v. *Wade* the State cannot violate the personal privacy of its citizens with regard to the abortion decision. Yet it is a known fact that certain social workers in state agencies place extraordinary pressures upon welfare mothers to undergo abortion, even to the point of threatening cancellation of welfare payments. This is clearly in violation of the decision of *Roe* v. *Wade* because it infringes upon the right of the mother to make her own decision with regard to

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abortion. Because the Catholic community has been so busily defending the stance as articulated by Professor Trinkaus, it has lost sight of the fact that *Roe* v. *Wade* cuts both ways precisely because it wisely protects individual conscience on this delicate issue. Because the Catholic community has been so singularly occupied by the position as expressed by Professor Trinkaus, it has abandoned its opportunity to assist mothers who in the exercise of their consciences do not want abortions. Blindness to the basically good thrust of *Roe* v. *Wade* has served to misguide the strengths and potential of the Catholic community. But then, does not blindness to the good and overzealousness in eradicating evil generally lead to lost opportunities and myopic visions?

WALTER R. TRINKAUS

My rebuttal was not based on the premise that it has been clearly established that human fetal life is a human being (although I believe it has, the extensive evidence thereof being relegated by Justice Blackmun to a footnote), but on the premise that the issue is such as to produce two requirements (1) The Court could not avoid taking a position, and in fact did when it prohibited protection; and (2) Those who believe fetal life to be human beings must in conscience seek to protect them by law.

Father Decker assumes that the wide acceptance of abortion today stems from some doubt as to the nature of fetal life. This, I think, is unrealistic. Most people involved with abortion have not analyzed this issue in any depth or at all. Moreover, there is an ever-increasing tendency on the part of the more knowledgeable proponents of abortion to concede at the onset of debate that these lives are undeniably human. They would permit, however, the elimination of these lives if their continued existence is harmful or inconvenient to others.

ON 'HELPING' SOUTH VIETNAM

EDWARD S. HERMAN

$300 million more?

Trog—*The Observer*

In each period of expanding American intervention in Indochina a virtually identical set of rationalizations, clichés and fabrications is set forth to justify the renewed effort to maintain in power Washington's chosen instruments of rule. In early 1975, President Ford and Defense Secretary Schlesinger have been repeating these now traditional routines, and once again the mass media report them without comment as "news," thus serving once again as propaganda instruments for the war party, still firmly in control of the executive branch of government. The Orwellian (or Biercian) quality of these clichés has been so striking that in 1968 I could not resist putting some of them into a *Great Society Dictionary*. The following selections show that seven years later these Orwellisms are as applicable as ever:

Aggression, n.

Providing aid and comfort to the side that we oppose. (See, "Assistance.")

Commitment, n.

Among the multitude of promises made and obligations incurred in the past, the one consistent with the line of action now planned. Sometimes a purely hypothetical obligation, self-imposed to lend moral sanction to actions decided upon today; in this case it is referred to as a "solemn commitment." Syn.—Preference.

Help, v.

See "Save."

Independent, a.

Aligned with us. (See "Satellite.")

Save, v.

Destroy. As in, "It became neces-

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sary to destroy the town in order to save it." Syn.—Help.

Self-determination, n.

The right of a people to select a government acceptable to us.

Once again we are being urged to honor our commitments and come to the aid of an alleged victim of aggression, although we have been and still are the only non-Vietnamese direct participant in the Indochina fighting; although we committed ourselves in the Paris Agreements to non-intervention in the internal affairs of South Vietnam (chap. 2, article 4); and although our client, Thieu, has quite openly refused to abide by the peaceful means of reconciliation laid out in the Agreements, in exact repetition of Diem's behavior from 1954 on. Once again, as in 1954-1964, the North Vietnamese and PRG are alleged to be "flagrantly" violating the relevant Agreements, although even a moderately attentive reader of the newspapers knows that neither Thieu nor Kissinger took the Agreements seriously, or intended to follow through on them, except for implementing the exchange of American POWs for withdrawal of U.S. direct combat forces. At the very time of his signing the Agreements, Thieu made it clear that he would not allow the promised freedom of expression, political organization and movement of people within South Vietnam, and for two years his violations have been consistent and comprehensive. Since the ceasefire, also, continued intervention in Indochina has cost the American taxpayer a staggering $8.2 billion, but once again it is claimed that only a little more aid will do the trick. For 25 years there has always been a "light at the end of the tunnel," but always some billions of dollars away!

The most basic of all the clichés, however, and the only one that I want to consider more fully, is that we are "helping South Vietnam." President Ford now tells us that we need an additional $300 million, fast, to "help South Vietnam." "South Vietnam" sounds like a country or people, not a Southeast Asian mafia, and the request to "help" has a superficially humanitarian touch, especially when tied in with related clichés on "aggression" and our solemn "commitments." Congressmen and the media have difficulty with these phrases, since to challenge them would be to question our very *ends,* not merely the cost effectiveness and probability of success of our means. They would have to deal with the painful fact (spelled out below) that we are backing an unrepresentative and venal clique who survive only by our largesse and force (past and threatened), and who are actually the *enemy* of the South Vietnamese majority.

This situation is hardly confined to South Vietnam. The American war party (Gerald Ford a long-standing member) has gravitated toward a regular sponsorship of "friendly fascists" in the Third World. This is usually rationalized on the grounds of our "security interests"—the friendly fascists will be friendly to *us,* and allow us to use them for our purposes, if we will allow them to be *unfriendly* to ("control" and milk) their own populations. Whatever the security benefits of this tradeoff, it is not easy to argue that we were, for example, "helping Greece" when we gave consistent support to Papadopolous and his torturers between 1967 and 1973. It is by no means clear in that case, or others as well, that we were even helping our "security interests."

In Indochina, also, it is doubtful that U.S. security interests were helped one iota by our immense and costly 25-year intervention. The position of the Left is stronger now in Cambodia and Laos than it was in 1964. Our faction in Vietnam is more dependent on external sustenance than ever. And the earlier rationale of inherent Chinese expansionism and implacable hostility is now widely recognized to have been partly ideological clap-trap, partly a cover for a simple desire to dominate. But the American war party hangs on in its dogged effort to determine who rules South Vietnam. And its investment there is so great that it must argue on all levels—we are not merely pursuing our (increasingly obscure) self-interest there, we are really "helping South Vietnam."

"Helping South Vietnam" for Gerald Ford is helping Thieu and his colleagues stay afloat. But there is no positive relationship between Thieu and "South Vietnam," if South Vietnam means either "the majority of South Vietnamese" or the interests of this majority as they perceive those interests. The points summarized below indicate that helping Thieu should be considered synonymous with "inflicting damage on South Vietnam."

(1) The Saigon government has *never* been selected by the South Vietnamese people in a meaningful free election, or by force resting on an indigenous base. Diem was imported from the U.S. and installed in power by Americans, and his successors have been chosen by or "cleared" with Americans. Free elections were rejected by our faction while they were still feasible (1956-1960), and they were not possible after 1965 because South Vietnam was subject to foreign occupation. (For most of the period 1968-74, the U.S. had more troops in South Vietnam than the Soviet Union found necessary in Czechoslovakia to keep *its* preferred faction in power.)

(2) The Saigon authorities have admitted time and again that they are unable to compete with the PRG on a *purely political basis,* and therefore need continued U.S. military intervention. A top Saigon general told George Kahin in 1967, "Frankly, we are not strong enough now to compete with the Communists on a purely political basis." (A large compilation of such statements was published by me in *American Report,* May 7, 1971.)

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(3) This minority status—and dependence on external force—was confirmed by the chief U.S. official expert on the NLF (PRG) and also by the most famous and experienced of American pacification officers. Douglas Pike, in his book *Vietcong,* makes the bald statement that the NLF was the only "truly mass-based political party" in South Vietnam. The late John Paul Vann, in an internal Army memo of 1965, stated that "a popular political base for the Government of South Vietnam does not now exist," and that the Saigon regime "is, in fact, a continuation of the French colonial system of government with upper-class Vietnamese replacing the French."

(4) Vann referred to our faction as "intrinsically opposed to the social revolution in progress." It was and is a small urban and military elite that has always regarded the peasantry—80 percent of the population prior to "urbanization" by violence, and still a majority—as a hostile mass needing to be "controlled" and "pacified." This is why massive defoliation of the countryside, the forced transfer of vast numbers of peasants (10.4 million, or a majority of the entire population, according to the Senate Subcommittee on Refugees), the systematic bombing and burning of hamlets, was participated in and accepted by the Saigon junta. In the words of Senator Edward Kennedy, reflecting on the evidence of Thieu's unconcern for refugees: "In the field of refugee care and in many other fields the Government of South Vietnam has been engaged in the systematic looting of its own people."

(5) The Saigon faction supported by the U.S. war party is one of the most corrupt and brutal in modern history. It holds more political prisoners than the vast Soviet Union—a recent calculation shows that per 10,000 population there are 50 political prisoners in South Vietnam, four in Indonesia and 0.4 in the USSR. And it tortures more people more systematically than any regime of modern times. It is the last word in the police state, as is well documented in the NARMIC/VRC publication *After the Signing of the Paris Agreements: Documents on South Vietnam's Political Prisoners* (1973), and Holmes Brown and Don Luce, *Hostages of War: Saigon's Political Prisoners* (AFSC, 1973).

(6) The Thieu government "represents" at most 15 percent of the population, consisting mainly of a rapidly diminishing part of the small Catholic minority, plus a congeries of mainly parasitic elements that have grown up on the basis of war and U.S. dollars—military officers, military contractors, bureaucrats, pimps and speculators. It stands in an actively hostile relationship to at least 85 percent of the population. The Thieu regime survives because it represents the *American* war party. As far back as 1959 David Hothham, describing how Diem "has crushed all opposition of every kind, however anti-Communist it might be," with the resources provided him by the U.S., concluded that "Diem's main supporters are to be found in North America, not in Free Vietnam." This is even more valid today as a description of the support base of the Thieu regime.

(7) A very large fraction of American "aid" and "help" to South Vietnam has been used to forcibly "pacify" the rural population of South Vietnam. (A crucial question, never discussed in the mass media and rarely in debates in Congress, has always been: "Why do we and our Saigon ally have to 'pacify' a people supposedly being victimized by somebody else's 'aggression'?") The war party in Washington has contributed trivial and tokenistic amounts for matters like health and education, but fantastic sums for killing. In 1968 public health outlays in Vietnam by AID totaled $28 million, while overall expenditures on Vietnam were at least $28 billion—a ratio of one to a thousand. Outlays for Vietnamese police and prisons have been consistently larger than those for schools—more than 20 times as great in fiscal 1974. A great deal of military and economic aid to South Vietnam is stolen. That which is not, however, *has a negative value for the majority of South Vietnamese,* as it sustains a long-term and cruel effort to control them by force and compel them to submit to a faction agreeable to an outside party.

The *Congressional Record* of June 16, 1967, contains a powerful letter written by "a hard-charging Marine 2nd Lieutenant" who found very quickly that instead of fighting Communist aggressors "90 percent of the time our military actions were directed against the people of South Vietnam," and that his mission as a soldier was "to pound a people into submission to a government that has little or no popular support among the real people of Vietnam." This is still the *de facto* role of "aid" to Saigon and the Ford-Pentagon version of "helping South Vietnam."

(8) It has long been a part of the intervention rationale that we are opposing prospective tyranny and keeping open the door to freedom. The fact that we have been supporting a tyranny all along has caused some muting of this claim, although we are still alleged to be interested in freedom in Vietnam "at some future date"! The war party in Washington, however, actually appears to *prefer* tyrannies—right-wing ones—as more manageable and consistent with our interest. Witness the positive support given to military dictators in preference to going democracies in Chile, Guatemala, Greece, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. The American war party may or may not like democracy in the U.S., but externally it clearly finds it an obstacle to its designs. In the Pentagon Papers, which were not intended for public view, the discussions of the reasons for intervening in Vietnam show that democracy in South Vietnam as well as the lives and welfare of the Vietnamese population were entirely irrelevant to U.S. policy-makers.

In sum, when Gerald Ford asks for $300 million to

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"help South Vietnam," we must translate as follows: the minority faction in Saigon that we put into power, and whose bills we still pay (85 percent of the Saigon budget), is unable to survive without still more. It is true that it steals and tortures on an unprecedented scale, and treats its citizenry as a hostile population to be repressed by violence. But Thieu is our choice and will do our bidding. If we stop funding him now, we—that is, the war party in Washington—will have lost control in South Vietnam, and power in Saigon will be returned to the Vietnamese! Even worse, Lyndon, Dick, Henry and Gerald will now go down in the historical record, finally and conclusively, as not merely responsible for profoundly immoral acts, but also as having failed badly even in the pursuit of their own narrow version of America's self-interest.

There was a period last fall when a new Arab-Israeli war appeared to be imminent. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's "step by step" approach to a Middle East settlement had bogged down, the Syrians were angrily opposed to an extension of the United Nations' ceasefire role on the Golan Heights, the Arab nations had just voted to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization's right to Gaza and the West Bank, and Israel refused to have anything to do with "PLO terrorists." The Syrians had been "massively" (that favorite word of journalists) re-armed by the Russians and Israel mobilized part of her army. For a while things looked bad indeed, but then the Syrians agreed to extend the UN's role for an additional six months after the November 30 deadline and the danger of war appeared to ease.

A week or so before things quieted down I met Ben Bradlee, the executive editor of the Washington *Post*, and I asked him how the *Post* was preparing its readers for the possibility of war. They were hardly ignoring the story, of course, but it seemed to me that newspapers ought to do something more than simply report the day-to-day events leading toward an outbreak.

At first Bradlee suggested that the danger was exaggerated and there was no need for a special effort. "Our best information in Washington," he said, "is that there will be no war while Kissinger and Ford are out of the country." Since they were due back within the week I pressed him on the point. Wasn't the danger of war great enough to justify some special effort beforehand? Wasn't there some way a newspaper might anticipate a war just as it does a national election? Bradlee didn't think so. "We have a man in Washington," he said, "a man in Cairo, a man in Beirut, a man in Tel Aviv and a man in Moscow. When the shooting starts they hit the typewriters."

He wanted to know, reasonably enough, specifically what I thought the papers ought to do and I couldn't tell him, but it seemed to me then, and seems to me now, that journalists might, if they tried, find at least as much to say about a war before it begins as they do about a heavyweight title fight before it is fought. Everybody knows what the front pages will look like after the tanks and planes cross the borders: SCREAMING BLACK 120 POINT BANNER HEADLINES!!! If a major tragedy should take place in the Middle East this year, or next, or the year after, we know it will be followed by a period of anguished inquiry. A fifth war would be bad enough. Imagine for a moment the psychological shock throughout the entire world if Israel, hardpressed, were to use even one of the nuclear weapons she is thought to have. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of the fact, or the depth of the response, and yet the events which more than a few sensible men believe are leading to precisely that result are reported, for the most part, with all the urgency of spot gold futures on the Chicago Commodity Exchange.

I am not proposing that every public utterance of every Middle Eastern leader; nor every exchange of small arms and artillery fire across the Israeli-Lebanese border; nor every new shipment of arms from the Russians to Syria, or the French to the Libyans, or the British to the Saudi Arabians, or the Americans to everyone, be given a triple column in red ink on the left lead of the front page. The point is not to agitate, after all, but to inform, and while a close reading of the papers now will give you most of the accessible facts, it will not give you a sense or a feel of the situation. It will, in short, allow you to watch passively, but nothing more, and I would have thought we had had enough of that.

Where questions of war and peace are concerned, newspapers tend to react passively, allowing events to dictate the length and prominence of their reports. To some extent this is inevitable: a partial mobilization of the Israeli Army obviously demands more attention than a threat to do so, and a threat more space than another report of no progress on the negotiating front, and so on down to the international muttering reported in one-paragraph wire service dispatches tacked on to the bottom of the stories of the day. If the press' habit of waiting on events were to be written mathematically (where P stands for the Prominence of the Source, E for the Element of Violence, and CiN for Column inches of Newsprint), it might look like this: $P \times E^2 = CiN$. For short we will call this the Noise Rule. The trouble with laying out a paper according to the Noise Rule

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is that it allows officials to orchestrate an Official Noise Level, and officials, to put it calmly, are not infallible.

A good example of the Noise Rule in operation is the recent controversy over proposals to invade Arabian oil producers in order to end Western oil dependency. The controversy had two sources. The first was an article in the January issue of *Commentary* by Professor Robert W. Tucker of Johns Hopkins University, who inquired, in calm academic prose, why the United States was not at least considering the use of military force against Arab oil nations. This is an important article which deserves to be read, if only for Professor Tucker's confidence the operation would be easy because the Eastern shore of the Persian Gulf has no trees for Arab guerrillas to hide behind.

Professor Tucker's question was echoed almost immediately by Kissinger's now famous triple negative in the January 2 issue of *Business Week*: "I'm not saying there's no circumstances where we would not use force." With the grammar untangled this means we would not use force in every circumstance, which I guess amounts to a threat. It was taken that way, at any rate, and it was certainly intended that way. For his own reasons, Kissinger was deliberately raising the Official Noise Level.

The odd thing about the endless analysis of Kissinger's motives which followed is that everyone was arguing the merits of starting a war over oil and forgetting, for the moment, the war which threatens all too clearly to start by itself. Eventually the press will be reminded of the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis and attention will turn back. If nothing occurs sooner, we can be confident of a new crisis or near-crisis when the current UN ceasefire mandate in the Golan Heights comes up for an extension again at the end of May. In the meantime, the true pressures leading toward or away from war will go largely unreported. What I would like to see is ambitious reporting which goes beyond the obligatory diplomatic dispatches, some attempt, at least, to explain why the Arab-Israeli conflict is so difficult to resolve. I am thinking of long stories (a full page, say) on things like the following:

— The Palestinians. It is clear that they are at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but it is not clear what they actually want and are determined to agitate to obtain. At the UN last November the PLO's leader Yassir Arafat outlined a settlement which the Israelis would never accept. Do they really insist on an end to Jewish immigration? Do they insist on a bi-national state throughout the whole of British Mandate Palestine? Would an Israeli retreat to the borders of 1967 only begin a new phase of agitation and crisis?

— What sort of men are the Arab leaders? King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, for example, has been widely quoted as having said he is determined to pray before he dies in an Arab Jerusalem. How much does he really care? What does he mean by an *Arab* Jerusalem? Why does Syria's Assad seem so much more militant than Egypt's Sadat? When George Wallace talks of his support for civil rights I know enough about him to be skeptical, but when Arafat hints he is prepared for compromise I don't know whether to believe him or not.

— Why do Arab-Israeli wars pose such a danger of American-Russian confrontation? This is frequently reported but never explained in detail. Apparently it is built into the situation. The Israelis, for example, have only a three-week inventory of ordnance, which means that any war which lasts longer than two weeks demands an immediate American supply effort. I imagine the relationship between the Russians and the Arabs is the same. We need to understand more fully why and how the great powers are inevitably drawn into an Arab-Israeli war.

— What is U.S. policy? This sounds self-evident, but I'm not sure it is. Presumably we are for a peaceful settlement, but if war breaks out anyway, what will we do? How much pressure are we prepared to put on Israel in the current negotiations?

— Finally, what sort of war are we talking about? The armaments on both sides seem to escalate each time around, making the fighting more desperate and the consequences of failure greater. The first war in 1948 began with 5,000 Jews on one side and 24,000 Arabs, in five separate armies, on the other. When war seems imminent the papers generally publish lists of relative military strength compiled by the Institute of Strategic Studies in London. I would like to know more about these tanks and planes, what they cost and what they do. More particularly, I would like to know something about the nuclear weapons which Israel is presumed to possess. How many has she got? How powerful are they? How would they be delivered? What would they do to Cairo, or Damascus, or Baghdad?

All of these subjects have been touched in passing by reporters, of course, but they have not received the serious attention they deserve. The whole question of the relationship between the United States and Israel, for example, has been avoided like a minefield, which it is. In this matter, particularly, passions run high. The press seems content to accept a passive role, to limit itself to reporting things as they happen; in effect, to leave the large questions of war and peace to The Authorities, as if this were a situation which involved them, but not us. This attitude might have made sense back in 1948, when the peace of the world was not involved, but it is simply feckless now. The armies involved are huge; the wars unfold rapidly, with sudden success or defeat; the Great Powers find themselves pressed to intervene. The time to take all this seriously is now. War is not only too important to be left to the generals, after all; it is also too important to be left to the politicians.

THOMAS POWERS

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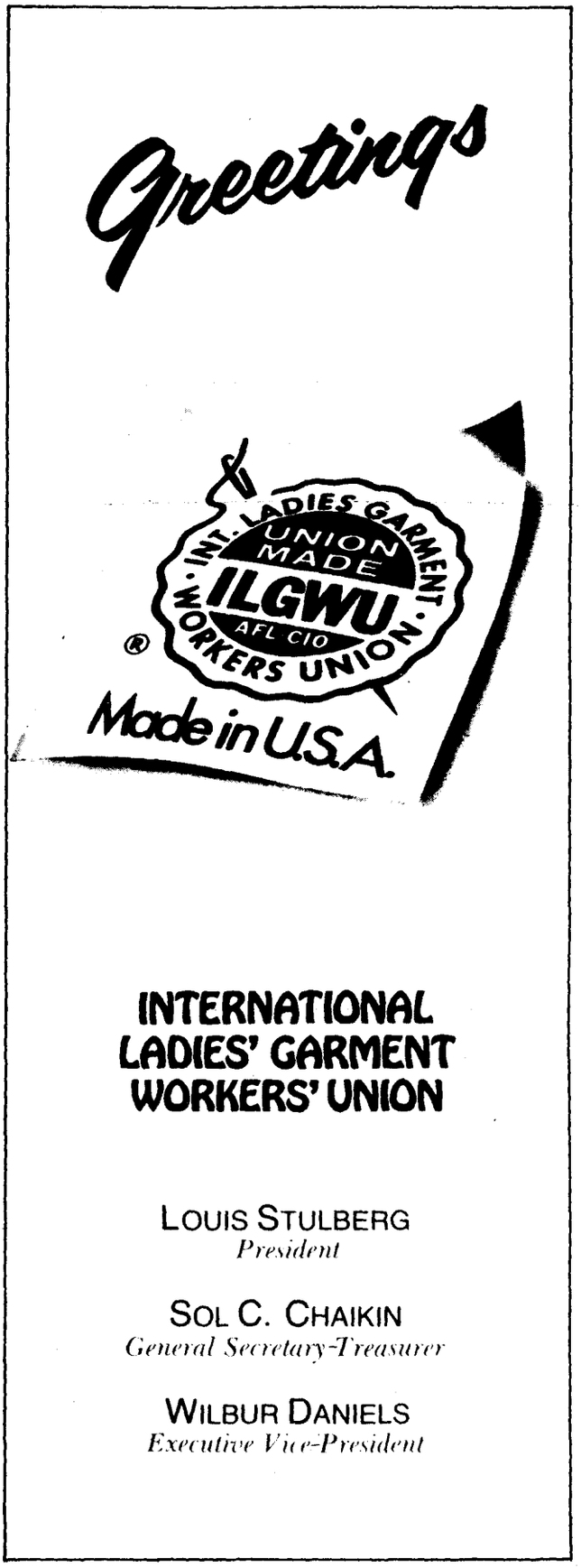
THE SCREEN

Bob Fosse's new film *Lenny* leaves us no doubt that the life of comedian Lenny Bruce (Dustin Hoffman) was fated. The whole structure of Fosse's movie implies this, for the film opens with an interview with Lenny's wife Honey (Valerie Perrine) done some time after his death, and throughout the movie this interview and others done with Lenny's mother (Jan Miner) and his agent are spliced into Lenny's story. The effect is that of hearing the epilogue delivered by the chorus after the catastrophe has occurred. The posthumous lilt to the praise they all have for Lenny keeps us constantly aware that his death is approaching.

Essentially this structure the film has is that of a flash-forward, a structure that always gives a fatalistic cast to events because it suggests that the future is somehow contained, or ordained, in the present. In order to reinforce this impression, Fosse repeats the flash-forward on a smaller scale in one crucial sequence where an automobile accident is anticipated with images of the wreck as Lenny drives towards its occurrence. Between this and a few other gimmicks Fosse uses, we feel by the time Lenny's career goes on the rocks that the whole course of events has been absolutely inevitable. After Lenny's court battles have impoverished him, Fosse gives us a sidelong glance at his Hollywood mansion, now abandoned and decaying away. Behold, it is indeed a fallen estate of the sort of man of high rank who, Aristotle tells us, is a fit subject for tragedy.

As Fosse sees it, the compulsion that leads to Lenny's downfall is his comedy. As in all grand tragedies, the knack that brings success also brings ruination. Along with the three interviews, Fosse splices in as well a club date Lenny is doing sometime toward the end of his career. Each clip from this monologue is inserted into the film's biography of Lenny at a moment when what is going on in his life will seem to illustrate perversely what he is saying at the night club. This juxtaposition makes it appear that he needed all the personal misery just to keep the comedy routines going. As the episodes in his story come closer to the moment at the end of his career when the monologue is being delivered, his comedy seems literally to be using up his life.

In the end Lenny's life has the same sort of punchline as his comedy routines. In one of the routines, for instance, he singles out every "wop," "kike" and "nigger" he can spot in his audiences. The further he pushes this attack, the more nervous twittering there is in the room. Then comes the punchline, which is that he's trying to defuse words. If we would all just come out and say



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such words as he does, he assures the audience, they would lose their power. Now everyone in the audience breathes a sigh of relief and indulges in the laugh he's been hoping for. What's remarkable about the punchline is that it's the one thing in the routine that *isn't* supposed to be funny. In order for everything that came before it to be a gag, a put-on, the punchline has to be taken seriously. It's the serious note, the social message, that makes it perfectly all right to go ahead and laugh at the rest.

In like manner, the serious note on which Lenny's career ends is supposed to make us accept everything else in Fosse's film. At his last club date Lenny mumbles incoherently because he's too strung out on drugs to be funny, and finally, getting no response from the audience, he just walks off-stage with the disclaimer, "I'm not funny. I'm no comedian." His whole show that night caps off his career the way the punchline caps off the routine about "nigger" and "kikes." The implication is that he's not a comedian because he's something more serious: the protagonist in a great social drama, the Messiah he looks in the film's final shot where he lies dead and naked with arms outstretched on his bathroom floor.

The result of all this, in Fosse's film as perhaps in Lenny's own life, is to give Lenny's sense of humor a certain momentousness it doesn't deserve. The only influential thing Lenny did was to introduce a new sort of delivery in stand-up comedy. The one dread that every comedian before Lenny had tried to suppress was the fear of not getting a laugh—the mutual fear of both comic and audience that the comic will die up there and embarrass everyone in the audience to death too. What Lenny did was to make this fear a part of comedy itself. His kind of improvisation constantly threatened to go too far, to say something that wouldn't be funny anymore, and thus he got the audience at his mercy in a way comics had always hesitated to exploit before. What his comedy really brought out in the open, then, or at least up on the stage, was not hypocrisy in America so much as that mutual fear of embarrassment comics and audiences had always shared. What his comedy led to, rather than any noticeable social redemption for his audience, was Don Rickles. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

DEAR ALLEN, DEAR DONALD, DEAR HART

The Literary Correspondence of Donald Davidson and Allen Tate

JOHN TYREE FAIN & THOMAS DANIEL YOUNG, eds.

U. of Georgia Press, $15

The Letters of Hart Crane and his Family

THOMAS S. W. LEWIS, ed.

Columbia U. Press, $20

SAUL MALOFF

ALLEN TATE, newly arrived in New York in 1924, the halcyon days of Modernism, as a kind of literary emissary from the Fugitive group centered on Vanderbilt University, wrote Donald Davidson his first impressions of Hart Crane, the New York group's greater and protocol chief: "Crane is a peach of a fellow and is treating me royally. He's a 160-pounder, strong as an ox, looks like an automobile salesman (at a slight distance) and is proud of his looks; talks incessantly of trivialities and laughs all the time; but confessed to me late last night that he was a mystic!"* Two years later the impression persisted. "I forgot to say," he writes Davidson, "that Hart Crane is living with us—one of the finest men alive—if possible, finer than his poetry. You will surely meet some day; the few good men in the world deserve to meet." A few months later, in a long anguished, despairing letter to his mother, which is devoted entirely to a detailed description of an unpleasant squabble with the Tates (the then-Mrs. Tate was the novelist Caroline Gordon), Crane writes that he can no longer endure life and is thinking of ending it with "powder and bullet." He and the Tates were spending the winter, or trying to, in an isolated farmhouse in Patterson, N.Y. and, inevitably, getting in one another's hair, had reached the boiling-point, on occasion, perhaps for heated words and injured feelings but hardly, one would have supposed, for the final gun. In fact, in his letters to Davidson Tate evidently didn't think the episode worth mentioning, for he doesn't so much as allude to it.

Resist evil impulse as one may, in writing of Crane it is impossible not to cast oneself in the role of psychoanalyst, or stern elder, or both; and by suffering his life, at whatever remove, in this immense collection of his letters to his parents (and theirs

* The correspondence is just that—*literary;* less letters in the usual sense than a running documentary record of the vicissitudes of Tate and Davidson as poets and critics and by extension of the Fugitive group at Nashville (John Crowe Ransom, R. P. Warren, Cleanthe Brooks, Andrew Lytle together with the epistolers), the Agrarians, the once-famous manifesto-symposium *I'll Take My Stand*, the Southern literary renascence so-called, and by further extension the New Criticism. As such, the Correspondence constitutes an important chapter in contemporary literary history and is essential reading for anyone interested in some of its sources.

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to him) one earns the right to judge. *The Letters of Hart Crane and His Family* must be read with great caution—*in conjunction with* the standard biographical accounts, principally John Unterecker's authoritative *Voyage* and Philip Horton's groundbreaking biography, together with Susan Jenkins Brown's affectionate, forgiving memoir and any other source that affords a glimpse of Crane from the outside. For out of as snarled an Oedipal tangle as ever there was, Crane, from the time he left his native Ohio for New York City in 1917 at the age of seventeen, using the dissolution of his parents' wretched marriage as his one-way ticket, constructed a persona for home consumption which while no less "real" was wildly at variance with the legendary *poète maudit*—the hard drinking, cruising, brawling, raffish, erratic homosexual and suicide.

What a cast of characters: the clinical paradigm, stereotype straight out of the clinical literature. Son ("Sonny," he sometimes signed himself when he was especially hard up for money—as in "your Sonny," in letters to his father): alternately dutiful and petulant, devoted and coldly uncaring, loving and merciless, obliging and heedless, arrogant and obsequious—and eternally dependent, forever seventeen. Mother: seductive and narcissistic, vaguely arty and vacuous, adoring and demanding, hapless, grasping, hypochondriacal, self-pitying, ineffectual, prone to convenient "nervous" prostrations, a spiteful martyr—eternally dependent, forever a maiden of seventeen. Father: the self-made businessman, a candy-manufacturer and hosteler, sermonizing about thrift, hard work, independence, handy with homespun wisdom, bewildered, inadequate, uncomprehending of why any redblooded American boy would want to fool with verses, especially obscure verses that can't possibly turn a dollar, instead of making the world his oyster . . . and yet somehow, improbably, the only sympathetic character in the cast.

SAUL MALOFF's *most recently published novel is* Heartland *(Scribner's).*

Why won't he settle down? he continually asks of his son. Why doesn't he stay with J. Walter Thompson, where Hart was briefly employed as a copywriter, and make a career of it? Doesn't he know the value of a dollar—that in the last analysis a man expresses his emotions in beefsteaks? Why won't he come home and enter the family business? "If your writing could only be a side line," Clarence Arthur Crane writes his boy, "a sort of pleasure to be taken up in the evening, an ideal to be followed as an avocation rather than a vocation; if you would only think of it just as men play golf, then I would see things differently." In the meantime, from the other antagonist of the sundered family romance, Grace Hart Crane is providing her own warm-hearted maternal counsel, the ripe fruit of her worldly experience: "You haven't been very confidential with me in that respect," she pouts, having heard from a friend in New York that Hart is in love, "—I do not care how much you are in love, just so you do not *marry*—You know that would end your writing career and other ambitions. *So keep your head.* Love is a *sickness.*" (Italics, needless to say, in the original.)

In the early years of the correspondence, life with mother is his dream of heaven. "How I do long for your ultimate, complete happiness!" he writes shortly after arriving in New York. "You are a queen and you shall have it too. Often I have come across the most charming, odd apartments in my walks and I like to think of you in one of them, happy with me and Grandma, in a few clean rooms." He begs her to come to her "anxious son" and she assures him she will try to "come there & have a little home, even if a modest one & you can be happy & so shall I." Remember me, love me, she constantly pleads; ". . . I am coming to see you & I want you to be glad to see me. It has been so long since anyone has been *glad* to see me." "My most devoted love is yours and you are always my dearest sweetheart." And if he should neglect to reserve hotel rooms for her, she tells him, ". . . I will have to bunk with you." When control needs tightening she can always fall ill, and does, seemingly at will; cry out across the country in pain and sorrow for adoration and fealty. Will nobody love her, nobody be glad to see her? Broke again, always broke again, he demands money of her. Why has she neglected *him?* He has only fifteen cents in his pocket, he writes her, and "a very empty stomach." Oh, she mustn't think he's forgotten, not for one minute, that when he was home in Cleveland for a visit she "twitted" him for not paying for his board. Well, let it be said that if it were not for the emotional turbulences battering his poor heart, he "would be well along in some college taking probably some course of study which would enable me upon leaving to light upon far more readily than otherwise, some decent sort of employment." But no, oh, no, he can expect no "smoother current" in his life. Now the truth is he hates to say this; he doesn't want to say it; may his tongue rot in his head for saying it; but they have driven him to such extremity that he is bound to say it, in the name, of course, of the truth, which will out: "I don't want to fling accusations etc. at anybody, but I think it's time you realized that for the last eight years my youth has been a rather bloody battleground for your's [sic] and father's sex life and troubles." He was nineteen at the time of writing.

They are reconciled after each falling out; the demands they make on each other cannot be so readily abandoned; they need each other; and, besides, they are co-conspirators in the bloody struggle against the terrible man who was as much her alienated father as his. Reconciled, that is, until the seething tensions of their lives together and apart across the years explode when he makes the mistake of confessing to her, upon approaching thirty, his homosexuality. We may imagine the scene and the thick clots of feeling released in her by the now-inescapable knowledge. We have no record of it, and neither refers to it in subsequent letters. Indeed, few remain to be written. Soon after his grandmother's death he and

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his mother fall to bickering over the inheritance. She draws back at signing the legal document; for with that hold gone, what is left? He swears never to write or see her again, and he never does.

Running a parallel course to the mother-son nexus, the letters to his father flow fitfully, a rush of them alternating with long sullen silences. When his father berates him severely enough for not getting and keeping a job, Crane sulks, falls silent—or comes back for more money. His father, that impossible philistine, either cannot or will not understand. Well, what can one expect of the chocolate king, that candy manufacturer? One gets, in fact, true if puzzled affection, good will, forebearance, loyalty, rich family feeling, an endless shelling-out of utterly undeserved fifty-dollar checks—and bewilderment, a pitiable inability to fathom the mysterious creature he's spawned. In this dramatic contest of wills and spirits, we're summoned by all history to ally ourselves with the scapegrace son, the bounder who between mad bouts of boozing and cruising managed to sit still long enough to compose some of the monuments of American poetry—and scoff at the cliché-mongering entrepreneur who knows that his "taste may be quite plebeian" and was good for nothing more than picking up the tab. Instead, all our sympathy flows to the father whose principal sin was that he couldn't make head or tail of his son's *White Buildings* and that he wants him to succeed to his business; while in turn the son abuses him for being a "disgruntled, narrow-minded commercialist" and in the same breath begs still more money. Clarence Crane's letter is full of deep, tightly-controlled pain, which he has come by, God knows, honestly; and he concludes by flinging the filthy money at his son's feet: "Anyway it is the money that you want so I am enclosing you $50.00." "Dear Father," Hart replies, "I was very glad to hear from you and it was generous to thus come to my aid." Years earlier he had written to his mother: "He is too low for consideration. I am only quietly waiting—stifling my feelings in the realization that I might as well get as much money as possible out of him. Why be scrupulous in one's dealings with unscrupulous people, anyway?" Yes, yes, yes, Mother Grace urges him, be diplomatic, be filial—there's money in it.

Writing out of a deep depression following the untimely death of his second wife Clarence makes a naked appeal for solace: "Your father has had a blow that has staggered him, and I shall be glad to have you put in some time with me, for I am lonesome enough even under conditions which could not be bettered, or with friends who help all they can." To this rending cry for help, for comfort, for love, Hart makes such response as he can dredge up—weak, short-lived but for a change *something*, though we would not put up bond for its authenticity.

Bond—one sinks into the language of commerce. Money is the tie that binds. These letters are about money and love, about the corruptions of money and love, the monetizing of love and the terrible affective power of money. They stink of money and they stink of love gone rotten at the clogged sources of feeling, brackish polluted feeling seeking and never finding the smallest sweet freshet of lifegiving waters. The ill-named Mother Grace Hart is vacuity itself—trivial, whining, primping, vain, simpering, hysterical, wielding however she can the formidable power of weakness, of dependency —on her mother, her former husband, her baby boy, her friends. Hart (to his mother the middle name, her maiden name, which he adopted at her urging), Harold (to his father, his given name), cut off in decisive ways in puberty, remained cut off in his relations with his parents all his life, truncated—bawling, clamoring to the end for such succor as money can provide. If it hadn't been for you . . . So the least, the very least, you can do is pay! Clarence, poor sod, reels through the letters like a man who never knew what hit him, counseling to deaf ears, and preaching his little sermons about money and hard work and thrift and common sense because it was the only language he knew, and so to instruct a son was a father's mission in life. Edgar Guest was his poet of poets and Elbert Hubbard, that babbling fount of homespun counterfeit wisdom, was his prophet and philosopher. He was fond of quoting Hubbard to his son: "Sooner or later in your journey through life your affection will be expressed in beefsteak." Now that miniscule aphorism may not set the angels in heaven to singing anthems of joy but in the fetid air of these letters, it is as close to genuine emotion and wisdom one is likely to get.

The letters are tedious, sordid, infuriating, saddening, infinitely depressing—and essential to an understanding of Crane as a man, affording us one profile of the multifaceted portrait which must be pieced together from all available sources; the profile he turned west. His letters must be augmented by our knowledge of what is excluded from them and its presence presses against, underlies and hovers over the omissions, sanitizing, deceits, concealments and subterfuges which he (and we) always practiced in his letters home.

In rare brief flashes the poet shines through and these are the only exhilarating moments in the endless dross. By a stroke of incredible fortune he moved into the very room, when he was living in Brooklyn Heights, from which Washington Roebling had directed the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge half a century earlier from the design of his father, John Roebling. For hours on end Crane sits at his window entranced by the life of the great river, the marvelous arc spanning it, the magnificent city beyond—the "finest view in all America," he writes his mother in a state of high excitement; and again to his mother he writes of the enchanting nights and the "distant tinklings, buoy bells and siren warnings from river craft. It was like wakening into a dreamland in the early dawn—one wondered where one was with only a milky light in the window and that vague music from a hidden world." On January 5, 1926, the fertilizing dreamwork done, he writes his mother: "Yesterday I finally got started into my

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Bridge poem. . . . And from now on I hope to have the necessary inspiration to keep steadily at it." Two days later he writes her again: "There isn't much news—only the good news (to me!) that I've been at work in almost ecstatic mood for the last two days on my Bridge. I never felt such range and symphonic power before me—and I'm so happy to have this first burst of substantiation since I had the good luck to be set free to build this structure of my dreams." And in a moving passage to his father he writes of the boat ride he had made at last down the Mississippi, a "place I had so often imagined and, as you know, written about in my River section of *The Bridge*." It was one of the great days of his life, he says: "There is something tragically beautiful about the scene, the great, magnificent Father of Waters pouring itself at last into the oblivion of the Gulf!" And just as we are softening at the edges he adds, in the same letter, that he is stone-broke as usual and if Father would reach a little deeper into his pocket it would certainly be appreciated by his devoted son. "I hope you can help me out a little as you did last summer. It's just a question of your interest in the matter, for I'm not claiming that you necessarily ought to"; and as he is "sort of candy-hungry these days," would Father kindly oblige by sending him a "delicious assortment" of *Crane's Best?*

Naturally, Clarence Crane, a candy man who knew all there is to know about beefsteak and chocolate, was more than happy to oblige. That kind of language he understood perfectly.

BOOKS

TOM MERTON: MONKS'-EYE VIEWS

MICHAEL ZEIK

Thomas Merton, Monk

BRO. PATRICK HART, ed.

Sheed & Ward, $8.95

If you know something about Thomas Merton, if he has been an influence in your life, then you probably love him. The price of this book will test that love a little, but the book does bring out a side of Merton's life that the vast majority of us were not privileged to witness: his life in community with his fellow monks. This book is written pretty much by those who rubbed shoulders with him daily over a period of more than 25 years. Plus a few chapters by those who did not see him regularly, but who were close to him intellectually and spiritually.

I wrote an article on Merton in this journal some months ago, which began rather bumptiously, "What the hell was Thomas Merton doing way out in Bangkok, Thailand, when he died five years ago?" I began with that question because I had heard so many rumors that the man had left Gethsemani, left the Trappists—and even, according to some, left the Christian faith. Merton's last work, *The Asian Journal,* laid those rumors to rest, one hopes, forever. This new work, edited by Brother Patrick Hart, Merton's secretary in the monastery, continues the process of what the Chinese call "rectification," and what the West, on another level, calls "demythologization."

Was Merton compelled, by a money-hungry community, to slave away at his typewriter, to over-write, wear his talent thin, so that Gethsemani would have the royalties to found more daughter-houses?

Did a narrow-minded abbot (a man with a business degree from Harvard University, if I'm not mistaken) frustrate the writer's abiding desire for the eremitical life, the Carthusian or Camaldolese hermitage? "Abiding desire" is not even an accurate description of Merton's feelings toward solitude; by the end of his life solitude seems to have become a necessary condition for his existence. Prayer was oxygen.

Did this prophetic voice of 20th century monasticism proclaim the end of "religious life" as we know it? Did he, in the name of reform and renewal, hope to foreclose the medieval tradition of the cloistered life?

The book ducks none of these questions. And even if, in a few places, it leans slightly toward hagiography, it still has the ring of truth. Merton may well have died a saint. He seems, at least, by the testimony of those who lived with him, to have been one of the most lovable of men, whatever his future official status in the Church may be.

Let us now answer those pesty questions—the ones most often raised by rumors and scuttlebut—and put them behind us, so that we can go on to consider what kind of a man Merton appeared to those who knew him best.

First of all, desire for more solitude aside, it seems that most of Merton's special needs, intellectual and physical, were met by Gethsemani. The abbot felt he had a kind of genius on his hands, a great talent loaned by God to the monastery. Some of the monks, as a matter of fact, complained to the 'Visitor' (the deputy sent annually by the mother-house in France to all daughter-houses) that the abbot "allowed Fr. Louis to do just about what he pleased."

But the abbot insisted that Fr. Louis be free to write whatever he wanted, as much or as little as he wanted. Merton once told him, "I'm grateful

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that you put no obstacles to my writing. If ever I were forbidden to write, I would soon land in a mental hospital." So, if he 'over-wrote' himself, it was out of the frailty of his own enthusiasm, or his own compulsion.

What he experienced at the hands of the narrow Trappist censors is another story—and one that the book sets forth in frank manner. That the Trappists have grown *with* Merton (and certainly, to a great degree, because of him) is evidenced by the fact that *this* book has official approval.

What about Merton's longstanding wish to enter the Carthusians, or a hermitage? Various stories have circulated to the effect that it was his abbot, Fr. James Fox, who prevented this development for over a decade. In fact, the abbot is frequently cast in the role of prosecutor (the Hebrew word is 'Satan') in Merton's monastic career.

In actual life it turns out that for the last 15 of the 20 years during which Dom James was Merton's superior, Merton was his own chosen confessor! It simply doesn't add up that the abbot would have chosen this much younger monk to be his spiritual advisor for 15 years, unless he had a great deal of trust in him, and unless their human relationship was satisfactory. More than that, the abbot has since retired from a position of authority and is himself living in a hermitage! It turns out he had the same basic attraction to solitude that Merton had!

The picture I get from the book is that the Order held back permission for Merton to leave the community, and that the abbot, once Merton had convinced him of the 'normality' of graduating from community to eremetical life, pleaded his case for him. Eventually the entire Order moved with Merton. (Had Merton run off to a hermitage, against obedience, by the way, he would never have won this privilege for the entire Order.)

Finally, did Merton proclaim the end of the monastic life in this generation? Did he see the whole lifestyle outmoded by the urgent demands of society in this apocalyptic century? The answer here is more nuanced. He certainly did give the impression that monastic life was in crisis. A nun who met him on his trip to Asia, near the end of his life, asked him whether Gethsemani had accepted Renewal. "Oh sure, they're doing great," Fr. Louis replied. "They now have cornflakes for breakfast." The sister was convinced Merton was about to leave the Order, and possibly the priesthood. (When the monks of Gethsemani heard about the remark they laughed as they had been accustomed to laugh for 27 years over Merton's barbs.)

But the answer to this question is that Merton surely wanted to see changes, some of them far-reaching, in Western monastic life. That these changes did not incorporate a total dissolution of monastic enclosure is made evident by his own move toward *more* and not *less* solitude. What Merton wanted—and I'm never going to be able to do justice to his vision in a short review—is both authentic contemplative experience, and openness to the social realities of the 20th century. He did want for writers, artists, and intellectuals who felt the need and the desire, to be able to be in contact from time to time with authentic men of prayer. He knew very well that such contacts could interfere with the life of prayer; and he warned those monks desirous of such meetings, that the *only* thing they had to offer the world was the very spiritual experience and insight which they might lose by too much talking about them. That he was not *simply* in favor of monastic revolution is evidenced by his remark at Calcutta, that "In the West there is now going on a great upheaval in monasticism, and much that is of undying value is being thrown away irresponsibly, foolishly, and they are accepting things that are showy, that have no ultimate value." If you want to know his full mind on this, read the book. It's complicated.

What about Fr. Louis, the man? How was it to live in community with him? This is the part of the book that I personally enjoyed most. We all honor prophets, but would we want our daughter to marry one? The community of priests and brothers at Gethsemani, not all of them outstanding intellectuals or charismatic personalities, were, after all, married to him. How did it work out?

Surprisingly well! But he wanted for so long to enter a hermitage; how could they have endured him? The answer to each question is, again, very well.

It turns out that Merton was very interested in community life, "knew what was going on, kept his eyes open, and missed little." Two days before his death, Dec. 8th, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, he wrote home to his brothers: "I think of you all on this Feast Day, and with Christmas approaching I feel homesick for Gethsemani. But I hope to be at least in a monastery—Rawa Sening. Also I look forward to being at (our monastery at) Hong Kong and may be seeing our three volunteers there."

For its part, the community made no special fuss over him. He was a monk to whom God had given a special gift for writing as He had given other brothers special gifts for painting, growing cabbages, ruling (Merton took a vow never to accept office as abbot), and bread baking. Fr. Louis expected no other treatment:

"He did not make a big thing of his writings, and once they came out he never read them again. He did not go out of his way to be humble about them, to speak disparagingly about them. . . . He knew he was a writer, he knew he was a successful writer, he knew he was a name. But to him, making something of that would be like a priest priding himself for his priesthood. . . . The calling did not make him; it was how he answered it that mattered. He tried to answer it with all he had."

To be sure, there is plenty of evidence in the book that Merton and the community were frequently at odds. He did not appreciate the business ventures (e.g., the production and sale of cheese), and he let them know it. He did not enjoy "preciousness" in

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either monastic customs or novices. He let them know it. His statements, in general, were probably more notable for their grace of articulation than for their moderation. And while he had an almost mystical appreciation of the value of "obedience" (especially for someone of his own mercurial temperament), he was neither fearful nor shy about fighting for minority views —even those of a minority-of-one.

The abbot who buried him, Fr. Flavian Burns, had been a novice under him. Yet, of him, at his burial, Fr. Flavian said:

"This was a younger Brother, even a boyish Brother, one who could have lived a hundred years without growing old. . . . Yet those of us who had the privilege and pleasure to deal with him on intimate terms, and submit our inner lives to his direction, know that in him we had the best of Spiritual Fathers.

"He was, then, both a Brother and a Father, and to those who wished it, he was also a faithful friend. To me, personally, he was one of the most helpful and lovable men that I have ever had the pleasure to meet. I owe him more than words can say. . . . He has left his mark deep in this community, and it will be with us for years to come, for he has planted it in the hearts of a generation, and God willing, it will be planted again for generations to come."

One last and (for me) unexpected observation: I have just returned from a visit to a Carthusian Monastery (the only one in North America). Vocations there are up to post-World War II levels. Many more come than are selected. The contemplative vocation remains statistically rare, but abiding. Beyond all fads and passing enthusiasms, abiding.

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REVIEWERS

MICHAEL ZEIK teaches at Marymount College in Tarrytown.

ROBERT LEITER has contributed to *The Nation, Commentary* and *Film Heritage*.

TODD GITLIN's most recent book is *Busy Being Born: Poems for Survivors of the Sixties* (Straight Arrow Books).

The End of Intelligent Writing

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

Sheed & Ward, $12.95

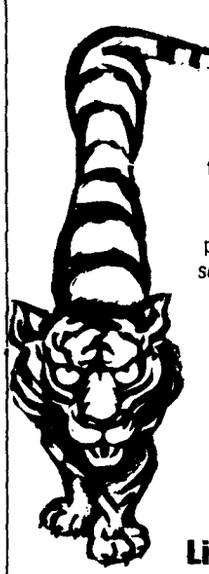
ROBERT LEITER

Anyone with more than a passing interest in contemporary literature knew of Richard Kostelanetz's *The End of Intelligent Writing* prior to its book length publication. Parts of the work appeared in *The Hudson Review* during the sixties; and rumors accumulated over the years that the author, because of his all-out attack on the New York Literary Establishment, was having trouble finding a publisher. This prolonged search for acceptance may explain Kostelanetz's use of a James Joyce quote as one of the epigraphs to his book. Joyce in a letter dated 10 July 1917 chronicles the hardships encountered before *Dubliners* appeared. But the use of a quote to justify one's theories, struggles and sense of moral superiority is an easy way around some difficult problems, yet typical of Kostelanetz's method. Thankfully the use of quotes contributes handily to the book's undoing. The need to repeatedly bolster one's theories with the ideas of others belies either a writer confident in his ignorance or one who is running scared.

The first part of *The End of Intelligent Writing* covers the same territory, albeit in greater depth, as Philip Nobile's recent *Intellectual Skywriting*, a study of *The New York Review of Books*. Kostelanetz's contention is that (surprise, surprise—or perhaps one should say ha, ha), a conspiracy holds forth in the Literary World. It is New York City based and populated predominately by members of the Jewish faith. The house organs are *The New York Review of Books* and *Commentary* with a little help from friends at *Harper's, The New Yorker* and *The New York Times Book Review*. Jason Epstein and Bob Silvers, Saul Bellow and Philip Roth, Lionel Trilling and Norman Podhoretz—these names crop up again and again. They, along with their cohorts, are bringing about the end of intelligent writing. Thus, in the second part of his book, Kostelanetz offers a "corrective" to the New York mob's doings and undoings —lists and lists of names: essayists, novelists, poets and playwrights who may revive the art of intelligent writing via literary magazines of true worth.

Anyone with eyes and ears is aware that Kostelanetz's thesis has its levels of truth. There may not be a conspiracy, but it is obvious that friends are doing their damnedest to help friends. The problem is not what is published, but rather the way in which information *about* what is published is disseminated to the public. The choice of fiction for review in *The New York Revew of Books* is one indication of the problem. Another is having Kurt Vonnegut review Joseph Heller's *Something Happened* on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review*. These two gentlemen may never have met (although that's unlikely), but they are undeniably kin of a literary sort. Thus, Heller's failings become, in the eyes of Vonnegut, grand successes. And one

Martin Bell is at it again.



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need look no further than the case of Philip Roth. (Kostelanetz surveys the matter, but misses the point.) Roth has been extravagantly praised from the start of his career. True, he showed great promise and with his third book, *When She Was Good*, created one of the finest novels of our time. In retrospect, however, one can see how crucial the "failure" of this novel was for Roth. *When She Was Good* did not win favor with the New York critics or the American public and so Roth, apparently afraid he was losing favor with the elders, turned his back on his finest achievement. *Portnoy's Complaint* dispelled any fears; Roth was acclaimed, a shining star once more. And his career followed a distinct path that veered as far away from *When She Was Good* as possible.

But the problem with Kostelanetz's book is not the thesis per se but the way it is developed. An author who makes sweeping judgments must inspire trust; Kostelanetz does not. His prose is convoluted and dull. But more insulting is his lack of consistency. His essay entitled "Contemporary Literature" (included in the volume *On Contemporary Literature* edited by Kostelanetz) states that Ralph Ellison is one of a number of writers who "have produced some of the most significant literature of the twentieth century." However in *The End of Intelligent Writing*, Kostelanetz has little to say about Ellison that is favorable (or for that matter anyone else discussed in *On Contemporary Literature*). And in his preface, Kostelanetz calls for the resurrection of neglected writers like Clancy Sigal and Vance Bourjaily. But he spells Sigal's last name wrong and, later in the book, denigrates Bourjaily in the same way he castigates his favorite target, Saul Bellow.

But it is in the second part of the book that Kostelanetz does the most damage to his thesis. In Chapter Sixteen, entitled "Young Writers in North America," Kostelanetz includes a list of said writers, and tells us that if we have read more than "a third of them (we) should consider (ourselves) part of an ideal literary public." I don't quite reach Kostelanetz's proposed quota, but I have read something—be it poem, play, essay or novel—by at least two hundred of these assorted writers. And I don't quibble with Kostelanetz's superior tone, only with the inclusion of certain names. Kostelanetz has spent some three hundred good-size pages constructing his conspiracy theory and then, with a straight face, includes the names of writers who have, by and large, been supported by and discussed in Kostelanetz's most hated journals. Among the poets listed, there is Jon Anderson with three fine books to his credit, a contributor to Theodore Solotaroff's *New American Review*, a poet whose second book *Death & Co* was reviewed in *The New York Times Book Review;* or Marvin Bell, whose first book was a Lamont Poetry selection, published by Atheneum, and who has appeared in many journals, including *NAR*. But the inclusion of Michael Benedikt's name must be a slip-up. Benedikt is poetry editor of *Paris Review*, an influential position. Kostelanetz has already broiled former *Paris Review* poetry editor, Donald Hall, for using his position to become "the prime poetry-entrepreneur of an earlier generation." If Kostelanetz's attitude towards Hall is not just a mean-spirited, personal swipe, then what's to stop Benedikt from following Hall's guidelines—as Kostelanetz believed Tom Clark, Hall's immediate successor at *Paris Review*, had done? And why then, after all the mud-slinging does Kostelanetz include Tom Clark on his list as well? Two other puzzling inclusions are Alan Lelchuk and Jeremy Larner among the fiction writers. Kostelanetz had damned both for being "on the mob make since the early sixties."

One could go on endlessly. But most conspicious on the fiction list are the names L. Woiwode and Robert Stone. Here are two writers who through sheer talent refute all of Kostelanetz's theories. Woiwode's first novel, *What I'm Going to Do I Think*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, won the William Faulkner prize for the best first novel of its particular year. Since then his stories and poems have appeared in every major journal, large and small, and his second novel is eagerly awaited. Stone's *A Hall of Mirrors* won a Houghton Mifflin Fellowship Award and his second novel, *Dog Soldiers*, reviewed on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review* is proving the most acclaimed work of the season. Both writers have been published by the powers that be, have been praised by them as well, and continue to inspire awe among their contemporaries.

At one point, Kostelanetz quotes the late Cyril Connolly to the effect that "No magazine can be more intelligent than its editor . . ." If one is mature enough to accept this viewpoint, then ponderous polemics like *The End of Intelligent Writing* become innocuous. Alternative ideas will always present themselves. Any number of them exist now, many that Kostelanetz does not itemize. *The Iowa Review*, *Fiction* and *The American Poetry Review* are just three magazines that have published Kostelanetz's younger writers. *The Fiction Collective*, whose first three titles have met with phenomenal success, is providing a viable alternative to traditional publishing methods. And the University Presses of Iowa and Southern Illinois have instituted admirable programs: the former continues to support the short story with its annual short fiction award while the latter rediscovers "lost" writers of merit, like the brilliant Edith Summers Kelley.

The End of Intelligent Writing is dangerous in one respect. The driving spirit behind it might be called "the creative-writing-course mentality." Our universities are producing great numbers of literate humans who are flooding the market and wish to be heard. Kostelanetz's complaint is that the establishment is suppressing these multitudes. But all who put words to paper are not artists. The pressure to publish —a staple of creative writing courses— may do more harm than good. We do not allow our writers the luxury of growth. And if it is true that magazines and publishing companies are only as good as their editors, then one must simply persevere. No matter who is in

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power, the best literature will endure. If one has no faith in this simple truth, then there is little need to create.

Radical Paradoxes: Dilemmas of the American Left, 1945-1970

PETER CLECAK

Harper & Row, $11.95

TODD GITLIN

Marxism without a functioning revolutionary proletariat is like religion without God: it is difficult, but a modern person has little choice but to make the most of it. Peter Clecak's excellent book is an exploration of the dilemmas inherent in that stance. It examines the ways in which four important post-World-War-II radical theorists grappled with those dilemmas, and how the New Left tried to short-circuit them. *Radical Paradoxes* is an achievement because Clecak is sensitive—though, I am inclined to argue, not sensitive enough—to the reality of those dilemmas; his strength is in his grasp of them, and his weakness is in his lack of what C. Wright Mills called the sociological imagination. This is curious, for Mills is one of the theorists whom Clecak very well understands; yet, in the final account, Clecak verges on the same mistake made by the New Left: of overvaluing the role of political will in history. Clecak has the historical perspective that the New Left scanted, but he is not able to explain, except ideologically, why the New Left ran amok in absurd and self-destructive utopianism.

The study of the development of Marxism in the American 1950s is properly a study of individuals. Clecak groups together C. Wright Mills, Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, and Herbert Marcuse as "plain Marxists," who tried to identify socialism with community and to discover the place of freedom, reason and happiness as an underside. From the beginning, Clecak is refreshingly blunt about his pessimistic premises. Advanced capitalism systematically manufactures alienation, yet alienation is inevitable. The attempt to eliminate all alienation is, at least this time, a dead end. "Plain Marxists," trying to formulate a revolutionary alternative to gradual change, foundered in their attempts to find a "surrogate proletariat." With the refusal of the industrial working class to take history into its hands, Mills, Baran, Sweezy and Marcuse, in their distinct ways, toyed with the potential of Third World revolutions, intellectuals, and countercultural students, only to see each of them fail to act up to its revolutionary billing; the theorists then succumb to doubt, if not despair. Clecak's intellectual portraits are by and large trenchant, that of Mills is outstanding. He points to Mills' "tendency to transform criticism into a myth of personal consolation," his "authoritarian undercurrent," his "forced hopefulness." He is sensitive to Mills' and Baran's intellectual and political isolation, and to the general tendency of radical intellectuals to disdain political activity in order to preserve their intellectual integrity. On Sweezy I think Clecak is rather too wordy, and overestimates Sweezy's contributions to contemporary radicalism, though perhaps this is a matter of taste. It is striking, though, that whereas Clecak's chapter on Sweezy seems ponderous, his chapter on Marcuse is scintillating: perhaps this is because Marcuse himself, in his grand manner, is scintillating. Clecak has no trouble criticizing him clearly and energetically yet sympathetically. Of all the recent critiques of Marcuse, I think Clecak's is the fairest and most inclusive.

But Clecak does not rest with pointing to the failure of the "plain Marxists"; he homes in on the New Left, arguing persuasively that it "moved . . . from a rudimentary sociology of change to a self-defeating dialectic of liberation." In the wake of the debacle of the nineteenth-century "labor metaphysic," which among other things finished off the Old Left, the New Left cast about for surrogate revolutionary classes. Failing to develop a sensible post-Marxist revolutionary theory—indeed Clecak believes with Sartre that Marxism cannot be transcended in our time—the New Left fell back on one or another last-ditch pseudo-Marxism, but its mad spinning of the Fortune Wheel of Revolutionary Agencies was an evasion of the hard paradoxes of radicalism in this time, and it ended up with a set of myths, "reducing reason and history to caricatures." The New Left vision "was essentially a simplistic negation of the worst features of the present." Attempting to leap over socialism to communist images of total community, it substituted metapolitics for politics and fell all over itself. The apocalyptic vision of new possibilities, built on vague assumptions of material abundance and on visions vacillating between the Orphic and the Puritan, ran up against the intractabilities of modern capitalism. By failing to calculate how American society would recoil from holistic utopianism, the New Left guaranteed its political marginality.

This is trenchant criticism, and has a great deal to recommend it. Its trouble, I think, is in the realm of omission rather than commission. A sociological imagination would consider what it was *in history*, concretely, that led so many New Left radicals to the same errors. That is, what was it in the social base of the student movement that fueled absurd utopianism? And what did the Indochina War and other political barbarisms have to do with the "reduction of reason and history to caricatures"?

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Lack of an analysis that addresses these questions leads to the positing of a "negation" of the New Left that is itself as abstract as the New Left's own negation of corporate capitalism. Clecak himself skirts this trap, but the temptation of many radicals these days is to sneer at the New Left rather than absorb its healthier ideas.

This is no merely academic point, for Clecak's advocacy of a movement for democratic socialism, in which I concur, will most likely founder for the same reason the New Left did: for lack of a realistic yet passionate sense of what the present situation affords. The question once again is not only, What is to be done? but Who is to do it? Clecak's pessimism about the prospects for democratic socialism ("many radicals do not accept the limitations on the political imagination that makes the principles of democratic socialism the most desirable basis of social organization in relatively developed nations") is well-grounded, yet does not go far enough. For, to put it bluntly, if the contemporary radical imagination tends to get out of hand, to get carried away with its own giddy severity, then who is to push for democratic socialism? Clecak speculates that New Left graduates may permeate American institutions, yet the mechanisms of this process are (understandably) vague, and he points to the danger of assimilation when the utopian desires are utterly stripped away. Clecak promises another book to continue this analysis, and I hope he and others succeed in reassembling the pieces of radical paradox into actionable forms; for in the absence of concrete possibilities, the interminable perception of paradox can stupefy, just as the interminable perception of revolutionary possibility can falsify reality and destroy.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 379)

the same time, one cheers the impulse that moves parents to reassert their rightful role in shaping the schools and community values by which they hope their children will be influenced.

In New York City we have, at least for the present, lost the battle for community control of schools. The unionized forces led by Al Shanker demonstrated once again that, in the words of a recent Chancellor, "the school system is operated for the benefit of the teachers rather than of the children or the communities the schools presumably serve." With Mr. Shanker's recent ascent to the presidency of the American Federation of Teachers, it is reasonable to fear the progressive Shankerization of American public education. The parents of Kanawha County may never have heard of Al Shanker, but they have, perhaps more incisively than they know, addressed themselves to a process of social abstraction in which, under the guidance of experts ignorant of or disdainful toward cultural particularity, democratic pluralism has no place.

Mr. Gibbons correctly sees that the events in West Virginia and elsewhere pose a major challenge to liberal orthodoxy in America. One hopes the insight will soon begin to penetrate the erudite bigotry that views millions of Americans as neanderthal victims of irrationality.

(REV.) RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

Anglo-Catholicism

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: It seems to me that the letter from Mrs. Estes, Jr. about the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church is as confusing as it is enlightening [Jan. 3].

It is true that there are Episcopal parishes that lean toward the Protestant side of the church, and they emphasize Morning Prayer as their regular Sunday worship. However, one cannot say that they are located just in the South, nor could one really say that New York is the seat of Anglo-Catholicism within the Episcopal Church. There are a number of Anglo-Catholic dioceses in the Mid-West and some in the South. There are Evangelical dioceses in the South and in the Midwest. New York is an amalgam in reality. There are

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parishes in the Diocese of New York that emphasize Morning Prayer as their regular Sunday service; there are those that always have the Eucharist.

What is more important, I believe, is the theology that is involved in the Eucharist, no matter when or how often it is celebrated on Sundays. It is the intention of the celebration that would be the strong point insofar as inter-communion is concerned, and it seems to me that the intention in the Episcopal Eucharist would provide for inter-communion. Indeed, it's been my experience that Roman Catholics who are not too bound to authority have felt free to communicate at Episcopal altars for a long time, and certainly Episcopalians have communicated with Roman Catholic altars without necessarily flying a banner and saying who they were.

As for Mrs. Estes' comment upon the Episcopal Church and its attitude toward women, I can only say "amen." The deliberations surrounding the ordination of women have been a great deal less than admirable, and I can only hope that we can become less sexist in the future than we have been in the past.

(REV.) WILLIAM B. GRAY

Food for the World

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Having heard Martin McLaughlin speak on the world food crisis on a number of occasions, I had the feeling that an article by him on the World Food Conference in Rome would be most excellent, and upon reading it my expectations were justified to the fullest ("Food for the World," Dec. 20). . . . Like Mr. McLaughlin, I was disappointed that the American delegation did not live up to the leadership expected of it, particularly when it came to the matter of the United States pledging additional food for humanitarian purposes. Perhaps if the Chairman of our delegation, Secretary of Agriculture Butz, had listened a little more intently to some of the members of the delegation, men like Senators Humphrey and McGovern among others, we would have shown a little more leadership in this regard. Secretary Butz argued that he did not want to do anything to hurt the American economy. If he had suggested to President Ford that we use a couple of hundred million dollars less for military hardware and apply it to the purchase of food for humanitarian aid for the hungry, he would not have been suggesting anything that would hurt anyone's economy. It is about time we reordered our priorities.

I know now that at the meeting on November 29th, the United States did pledge several million additional tons of food, but, as Mr. McLaughlin said, if this had been done during the Conference itself, it would have encouraged greater participation on the part of others who were in a position to help and certainly given greater hope to the peoples of the developing countries, many of whom are now actually threatened with starvation.

It is true the Conference did achieve many significant results in its recommendation that steps be taken to attack various facets of the problem such as the need for greater agricultural development, which must be given first priority, the setting up of a world food reserve and an exchange of information on food resources, and finally, its proposal that a world food council be established to work more closely on all these matters with existing United Nations agencies.

In conclusion, Mr. McLaughlin emphasizes the moral responsibility our own country has in this crisis and the importance of keeping the seriousness of the threat before the minds and hearts of the American people. The Bishops of the United States and the National Council of Churches, as you know, have already taken steps to assure this.

Commonweal is to be congratulated on the publication of probably as fine an analysis of the World Food Conference in Rome as one can read.

(MOST REV.) EDWARD E. SWANSTROM
Executive Director
Catholic Relief Services
United States Catholic Conference

Michael Novak (Cont.)

It is premature to endorse anybody. But I think it is a shame that the list of potential presidents hasn't been expanded to include Mr. Shriver, now in private life as an international lawyer, and others outside of politics but not lacking in political experience.

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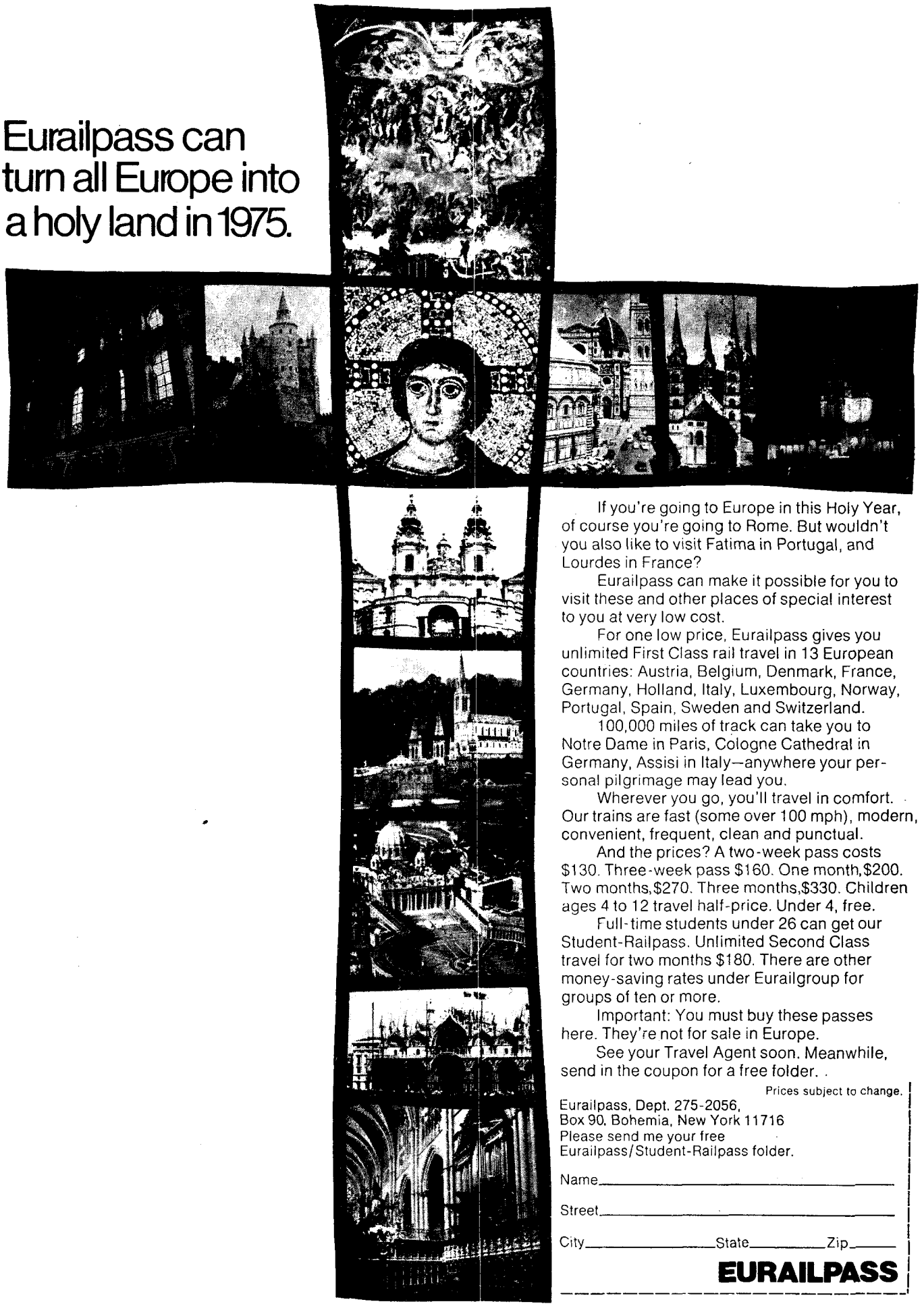

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